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Work to start soon on new industrial units

Students raise £900 for charity

Library Friends celebrate

Two of the young visitors to the Winter Festival

THE Friends of Skelmersdale Library (FOSL) celebrated their first anniversary with a Winter Festival and a visit by Mayor of West Lancashire, Councillor Nikki Hennessy who led a rendition of Happy Birthday and cut the birthday cake.

Mary Whitby from FOSL said: "The Friends group would like to thank the mayor, Lancashire County Council library staff and the Skelmersdale Community Choir for their beautiful singing.

"Our Saturday Club organisers and children made lovely calendars and book marks which they sold at the Winter Festival. All the stallholders sold handmade gifts, wool and patterns, books and framed pictures.

"We also had a tombola, refreshments and a cake stall. We'd like to thank all the kind people who made delicious cakes and donated them so we could raise funds to put on free activities for children throughout the coming year."

Also at the event Tawd Vale Lions set up an information stall and presented FOSL with a cheque. Mary added: "We read about the grants available in the Champion a few weeks ago, applied and found out we had been successful just a few days before the festival.

"We made just over £300 for FOSL at the festival and over the course of the day around 500 people came into the library."

SKEM WOMAN JAILED FOR PART IN ASSAULT

By **Lynda Roughley**

26–year–old handed 18–month sentence

A SKELMERSDALE woman has been jailed for her part in a horrific assault on a young Southport woman when a jealous love rival attacked her with her own stiletto–heeled shoe.

Carly Rendell, 26, of Evington, has been jailed for 18 months for her part in assaulting Amie Urquhart in Southport in March 2015.

Rendell's friend, Julie Green set on her former boyfriend's new partner, Amie Urquhart, after seeing the couple together in a pub.

"This case revolves around the all–too–familiar story of a break–up of a relationship leading to anger, jealousy and revenge," said Judge Norman Wright.

Jailing 46–year–old Green for two–and–a–half years he said that the heel was named after the stiletto dagger "and it can be a fearful weapon."

Judge Wright said that, worryingly, "this is the third time before me in the last few months where a lady has brandished a stiletto shoe, using the heel as a weapon."

He told Green, who had a suspended sentence for another assault hanging over her at the time, "You struck her and caused very serious injury, you tore the tear duct."

Liverpool Crown Court heard that Miss Urquhart, 30, needed emergency surgery to repair that injury and she subsequently had to undergo a further operation to repair a detached retina.

It is expected she will have permanent blurred vision in her left eye and will have to wear spectacles. She has also been left scarred by the corner of her eye.

Defenceless

"That scarring and disability will be with her for the rest of her life," said the judge, who added that the victim, who sat in the public gallery, had also suffered psychologically.

Miss Urquhart and her boyfriend, Stephen McLoughlin, were in the Fox and Goose pub in Nevill Street, Southport, on March 9 last year when words were exchanged with Green who was there with her friend, Rendell.

Miss Urquhart and Mr McLoughlin left and went to a nearby cash point on Lord Street but the two women followed and both punched and kicked Miss Urquhart and her boyfriend.

While Miss Urquhart was defenceless on the ground Green repeatedly hit her in the face with one of the victim's own shoes, which she had taken off as she thought it would be easier to flee without them.

The judge told them their behaviour, which was shown on CCTV, was "disgraceful." He said he believed the remorse expressed on their behalf was for themselves and not for their victims.

He sentenced Rendell to 18 months imprisonment. She had pleaded guilty to assaulting the couple and Green, of Meadow Lane, Ainsdale pleaded guilty to wounding Miss Urquhart and assaulting Mr McLoughlin.

The judge imposed life–long restraining orders on them to keep away from their victims.

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Don't lose your vote!

WEST Lancs Council is urging residents in the borough to check their details are correct on the 2016 Register of Electors.

The revised version of the Register of Electors is available for inspection, under supervision, during normal office hours at the council offices at 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk (Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 4.45pm).

You can also check your details by calling 01695 585018.

A police and crime commissioner election and borough council elections in some wards are taking place on Thursday, May 5 and a referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union may be called. People who are not on the Register of Electors will not be able to vote in those elections or in any referendum.

The borough's Returning Officer, Gill Rowe, said: "You need to be on the electoral roll to have your say in the local, police and crime commissioner elections and any referendum and incorrect details may result in residents not being able to vote – so it really is worth taking the time to check."

For more information about the Register of Electors, or checking your details, contact Electoral Services on 01695 585018 or email elections.office@westlancs.gov.uk

To find out about registering to vote visit www.westlancs.gov.uk/registertovote or www.gov.uk/register–to–vote.

Healthcare body's public meeting date

THE West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will hold their next board meeting in public on Tuesday 26 January starting at 9.30am.

Scheduled to run for around two hours, the meeting will be held in the Front Hall at Hesketh with Becconsall Village Community Centre, Station Road, Hesketh Bank

Members of the local community are welcome to attend.

Questions relating to items on the agenda, which is published one week prior to the meeting, can also be raised by visiting the governing body page of the CCG's website or by contacting the secretary to the board directly on 01695 588144 by noon on Monday, January 25.

There is also the opportunity for attendees to have an informal discussion with board members at the end of the meeting.

County's gritting squad geared up for cold spell

...but residents urged to stay alert

TRANSPORT chiefs say they are prepared for the expected change in the weather conditions following an unseasonably warm winter to date.

But although Lancashire County Council's 49–strong gritting fleet are ready to swing into action, residents are warned to stay alert for very changeable conditions, which could make roads treacherous even after they've been gritted.

County Councillor John Fillis, Lancashire's cabinet member for highways and transport, said: "Our gritters have been out less than 10 times so far this winter but we understand from the Met Office that the long–range forecast from now on is for the kind of weather we'd usually expect at this time of year.

"We're as ready as we can be for whatever the weather throws at us with over 30,000 tonnes of salt in stock and 49 gritters ready to go from nine depots based around the county.

"We get very accurate weather forecasts and grit whenever a freeze is forecast. It isn't practical to treat every road, however we treat all the A roads, all B roads, and some C roads, which adds up to around 1,500 miles of road – about a third of the total in Lancashire.

"Last year we experienced some very changeable conditions, including incidents when hail fell on freezing roads and turned to sheet ice in a few minutes. Rain falling on freezing surfaces can also create black ice which is virtually impossible to see, and can happen even when a road has been gritted.

County Councillor John Fillis

"The very wet conditions we've had in recent weeks will also mean that run–off from fields or springs flowing up could create ice patches on rural roads, and I'd ask people to beware of this.

"I'd also ask people to remember that just because a road has been gritted it doesn't mean it won't be icy as it takes time and the action of tyres to mix the salt with the ice and make it work by lowering the temperature at which the water freezes."

When it snows, it can cost up to £100,000 a day to keep the operation going. The county council also has on standby a number of agricultural contractors ready to clear more remote rural roads in the event of heavy snow.

For more information visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/winter.

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Work to start soon on new £1.7m industrial units at Gillibrands

Report by **Henry James**

BUILDING work is set to begin shortly on 11 new industrial units being created by West Lancs Council to "meet the needs of modern businesses".

The council regularly receives enquiries from businesses looking for smaller factory units suitable for light industry and manufacturing purposes and it's hoped the new development – Greenshoots located at Gorsey Place, Skelmersdale – will help meet that demand and create new jobs and provide new services in the borough.

Housing and regeneration specialist, Keepmoat is building the units on behalf of the council which is also working with management consultants NPS on the project.

The new units should be available to rent by this summer and, according to the council, the development will offer businesses the following:

- An impressive business base.
- A secure, gated facility.
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The 11 new units range from approximately 1,250 sq ft to 2,500 sq ft and will have HGV access. Gorsey Place is in Gillibrands which has excellent links with the motorway network.

Interest in the development is expected to be high and companies wishing to take one or more of the units can contact the council's estates team on 01695 712616 or email pat.whearty@westlancs.gov.uk.

Councillor Ian Moran, council leader and portfolio holder for economic regeneration, said: "This project will boost the local economy by helping local businesses and attracting new ones to the borough, all of which will help create jobs in West Lancashire.

West Lancs Council leader Councillor Ian Moran goes over the plans for the new units with Andy Smith, contracts manager for Keepmoat and Ian Clemow, principal architect for NPS

"There haven't been many developments in this area to build modern industrial units of this size for rent and we are doing this to meet the demand and demonstrate our confidence in Skelmersdale as a place to do business.

"If this scheme proves as successful as we expect then we will look at doing more projects to create new and improved business premises."

Keepmoat plans to work with the council, West Lancashire College and local training agencies to provide traineeships and work experience placements for local people.

Jeff Hook, construction director for Keepmoat in the North West, said: "As with all of our schemes, we have committed to investing in training and apprenticeships, which will not only serve to tackle the skills shortage our industry is facing, but will support local people in progressing within the trade. We are delighted to be working in partnership with the council on this project, which will deliver some much–needed new business units and wider investment in Skelmersdale."

The development is expected to cost £1.7m, financed by a combination of council resources set aside for such purposes and prudentially borrowing the remainder.

Bureau sees rise in demand for debt advice following festive season

STAFF at the Citizens Advice centre in Skelmersdale have seen an increase in the number of debt appointments in the weeks following Christmas.

Many people struggle financially in January as the bills come in from the festive season, which it is estimated costs families on average about £820.

Figures from the Bank of England have shown that in the run–up to Christmas, families in the country borrowed £1.5billion on loans and credit cards. Throughout 2015 borrowing increased by 8.3%.

Financial experts are concerned that people are paying for Christmas by racking up debt on credit cards.

The head of Citizens Advice, Gillian Guy, has said the increase in consumer borrowing "raises concerns."

Debt advice is available at the Lancashire West Citizens Advice Bureau, which is based at the Concourse Shopping Centre in the town.

Lisa Bolton, debt advice project manager at Citizens Advice Lancashire West, commented: "We tend to see an increase for debt appointments in January and post–Christmas. However the need for debt advice is ongoing and throughout the year.

"We see a broad range of people who attend for advice. A large proportion of the people who attend Lancashire West Skelmersdale office are in need of debt advice and also benefit and housing advice. We see people from all over West Lancashire area.

Lisa Bolton

"We provide a specialist debt advice service both face–to–face at our offices at Skelmersdale and also over the telephone for people who have access difficulties or would prefer telephone contact. Our advisers can discuss and explain debt options and also provide on–going support where necessary."

People can attend drop–in sessions at the centre on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.30am to 4pm with no appointment necessary.

However, to arrange an appropriate appointment residents are advised to contact the main helpline number on 0344 245 1294.

Councillor hails 'Benefit Check' campaign

County Councillor Julie Gibson

SKELMERSDALE County Councillor Julie Gibson has welcomed news of the continued success of the 'Benefits Check' campaign for residents aged over 75 in the borough.

The campaign was launched last summer as a joint project between Lancashire County Council's welfare rights unit in partnership with West Lancs Borough Council.

Just less than 2,500 over–75s who receive some help towards their rent or council tax were identified and written to and the team worked with representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) visiting service to advise the residents of any extra help that they may be entitled to.

Cllr. Gibson said: "I have received some up–to–date figures from the welfare rights team which show that so far 368 residents have been advised resulting in 176 successful claims.

"The annual cash gain currently stands at £563,578.49. This is money that will go directly to claimants in the borough helping to improve the health and wellbeing of some of our most elderly and vulnerable residents.

"I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this campaign so far and encourage anyone who thinks they may be eligible to contact the team at Lancashire welfare rights on 01772 538809 or online at www.lancashire.gov.uk /benefits–and–grants."

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Borough ban for hare–hunting trio

Neil Walsh

Liam Doherty

James Reid

By Tom Martin

THREE men from Sefton have been banned from entering parts of West Lancashire after being caught using dogs to hunt hares.

Liam Doherty, 26, from Crosby and James Reid, 32 and Neil Walsh, 30, both from Bootle, have been given 18–month Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO).

It means that the trio can no longer enter a large area of West Lancashire with a dog or be in company with anyone who has a dog, until June 2017.

The orders, issued at Ormskirk Magistrates Court under the Hunting Act 2004, were imposed after they were caught entering farmland in the Leverhulme Estate with four dogs with the intent of hunting brown hares, a protected species.

PC Ivan Leivers of Lancashire Police said: "These three men have regularly and routinely entered West Lancashire with the express intent of hunting a protected mammal – the brown hare – with their dogs.

"This order will ensure that if they continue to partake in this barbaric activity, they face the very real possibility of being given a custodial sentence. The other offenders who come here to carry out coursing should be warned, we will apply for these orders wherever and whenever we can."

Sgt. Craig Appleton added: "This result is the culmination of many hours of hard work put into the case by PC Leivers which has come to fruition in the form of the degree of control which is now placed on these individuals.

"Lancashire Constabulary is committed to protecting all communities from crime and this result will send out the message to any persons thinking of committing rural crime of this nature that their actions will not be tolerated. In future cases of a similar nature in West Lancashire, CBOs will be considered and if granted will be enforced."

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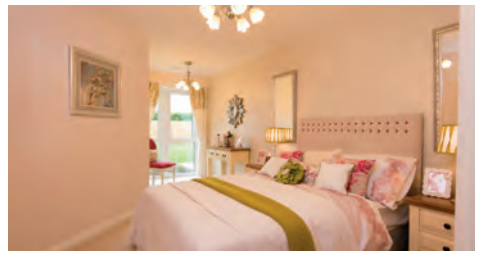

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Junior doctors' strike causes disruption

Report by **Henry James**

JUNIOR doctors at Southport and Ormskirk hospitals went on strike yesterday (Tuesday) causing disruption to patients and the expected cancellation of operations.

It was the first in a series of three nationwide strikes junior doctors have planned in their dispute with the government over new contracts.

The 24–hour walk–out began at 8am.

Rob Gillies, executive medical director at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust, said the trust was working with doctors and nurses not affected by the strike and other clinical staff on robust plans to ensure that appropriate care was delivered.

He added that with the exception of dermatology, ophthalmology and maxillo–facial care, many of the planned services the hospitals provide would be affected and they were in touch with the patients concerned.

Mr Gillies commented: "Patients in need of emergency hospital care will continue to receive the treatment they need, when they need it. In all cases priority will be given to those patients with the most pressing health needs."

The walk–out was called after talks between the British Medical Association and the government stalled.

The BMA is concerned the government wants to reduce the number of weekend hours for which junior doctors can claim more pay for working unsocial hours. The BMA also want to see more protection in place to stop junior doctors being over–worked.

Further strikes are planned for 48 hours from 8am Tuesday, January 26 and for nine hours on Wednesday, February 10.

Junior doctors on strike at Southport Hospital

Officers recommend green light for pub/restaurant plan

By **Henry James**

A PROPOSAL by brewers Marston's to build a pub/restaurant on the existing Asda overflow car park at Ingram, Birch Green has been recommended for approval by West Lancs Council officers.

The application is scheduled to be discussed at a meeting of the borough's planning committee on Thursday (January 14).

The restaurant would cater for up to 180 dinners and be of "traditional design."

It is hoped it will secure inward investment of over £2m and create between 40 to 50 full–time permanent jobs for local residents.

Marston's say the facility will be targeted at families and those wanting to dine.

The main entrance of the pub/restaurant would face south and front the car park and include a covered terraced area and a garden with a small children's play area.

Customers would be able to access the venue by turning off the roundabout which leads to the Asda delivery area.

It would also have parking spaces for for 55 cars.

In his report on the proposal, the council's assistant director of planning, John Harrison, has written: "The proposed development is considered to be acceptable and provides significant improvements to the leisure and evening economy within Skelmersdale town centre and is unlikely to prejudice the outstanding requirements of the development plan.

"Furthermore, the proposal has no significant impact upon the local highway network or surrounding residential amenity and is therefore in accordance with the development plan."

He also believed the pub/restaurant would "help create an evening economy with a recognised family pub/restaurant chain, which is lacking in the present town centre and will therefore improve the viability and vitality of the town centre and complement the existing and proposed uses in the area."

Latest fitness trend coming to town

THE latest fitness sensation, Block Fit, is coming to The Bannatyne Health Club in Skelmersdale.

Devised by former X Factor star Chico, Block Fit offers 15 minutes of dance, 12 minutes of combat, 12 minutes of high–intensity routines and 12 minutes of yoga–inspired moves aiming to combine mind, body and soul in one class.

Tipped to be the big fitness trend in 2016 it is claimed to burn between 650 and 1,000 calories per class with classes suitable for all ages and fitness levels.

Fitness instructor at the club, Kim Kenealy, will lead the classes. After being taught by Chico himself Kim impressed so much that she underwent further training and is now a Block Fit master instructor, qualified to teach colleagues.

General manager, Iain Black, said: "Block Fit is going to be the big fitness class in 2016 and we're delighted to be offering it to our members. The mixture of dance, combat, intensity training and yoga moves and meditation is exciting and fantastic fun.

Chico in action during a Block Fit class

"Kim is really enthused by Block Fit and we're very proud that she qualified as a master trainer and convinced that members will absolutely love the new classes."

News Desk Tel. 01704 392400

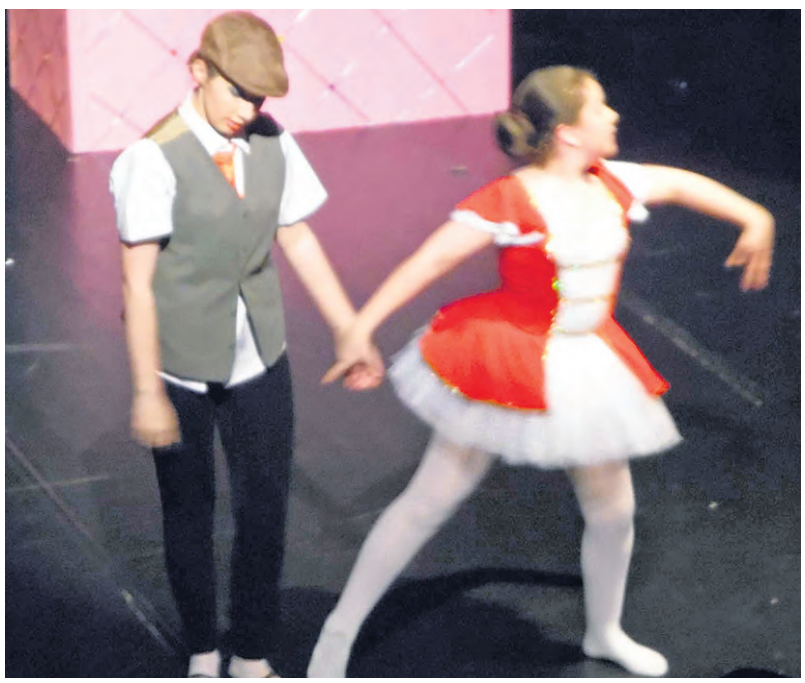
Youth group funds dance project

YOUTH group, Skelmersdale Action for Youth (SAY) has funded a 16–week Street Dance course run by Attitudes Dance School at the Youth Zone.

SAY leaders Alan Lewis and Phil Newby were invited to watch the project and students on the course performed a set of routines culminating in a show at Skelmersdale College.

Meanwhile SAY are again running multi activities this month for seven to 18–year–olds including a Let's Get Active crazy cart programme and other activities will include Cardiff skate, solo wheels, canoeing courses, Big Ball, tufboarding, sledging, Street Dance, swimming and team–building sessions.

The group has received funding from a number of organisations including Lancashire Sport's Positive Together, Community Foundation For Lancashire, Comic Relief, John Laing Charitable Trust Funds, Lancashire Early Action Fund, Lancashire Police and the police and crime crime commissioner's community fund.



Two of the performers at the show at Skelmersdale College

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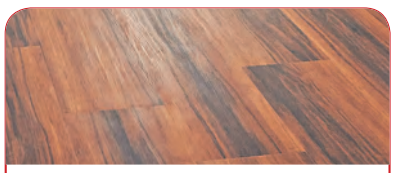

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Popular Potato Day returns to Concourse

THE West Lancashire Allotments Federation will hold their fourth annual Potato Day at the Concourse Shopping Centre in Skelmersdale on Saturday, January 30 in conjunction with Brighter Blooms of Preston.

Ray Fowler, secretary of WLAF said: "At the event, Potato Day customers will be able to choose from over 90 varieties of potatoes beloved of all growers.

"Also available will be seeds, onions, garlic, soft fruit bushes and fruit trees and the chance to discuss all things related to growing with members of the federation.

"Advice will also be available on growing, pruning and storing home–grown produce. The event will be open from 9.30am until 3pm.

"Staff from Skelmersdale Library will also be in attendance with gardening books to lend and the opportunity to join the Lancashire Library.

"We're inviting everyone to come and see us in the Concourse West Square outside Iceland.

Visitors to last year's Potato Day at the Concourse

"I would also like to thank the management of the Concourse for the opportunity to promote allotments and the federation."

For further information contact Ray by email on rfowler001@btinternet.com.

Midstream students raise £900 for domestic violence charity

Report by **Henry James**

STUDENTS on Midstream's Pathways to Adulthood programme in Skelmersdale have raised £900 for charity The Liberty Centre by hosting a weekly coffee morning at St James' Church in neighbouring Orrell.

The increasingly popular coffee morning is held every Tuesday but the students work throughout the week to shop for ingredients and bake the cakes. They are also responsible for financial, planning and marketing tasks.

The Liberty Centre is a local charity which works to prevent incidents of domestic violence and support victims.

They offer members of the public information about domestic violence/abuse by services via leaflets and a drop–in centre. They also have a 24–hour freephone helpline (0808 100 3062) to offer support to families.

Parish priest, Father Gerry, said: "I wanted to support The Liberty Centre to raise local awareness of the charity and their services. They depend upon donated money to keep their service running."

Rachel Flaherty, who supports students to run the coffee morning, added: "The students are very enthusiastic about all aspects of the project. They especially enjoy serving the customers and having a chat. This project has developed the students' confidence and inter–personal skills.

"Thanks go to all who attend the coffee morning and support the charity and our students."

The coffee morning will continue to run on Tuesday mornings from 10am at St James' Church in Orrell, where homemade cake and hot/cold drinks will be served.

Students Sean, Michael and Dale, and Midstream staff members Shelley and Charlotte present Fran and Vera from The Liberty Centre with the cheque for £900. Code1086769

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Council offers helping hand to dispose of flood–damaged goods

Free collection service will operate until end of month

Report by **Danielle Thompson**

WEST Lancs Council is continuing to help residents following flooding in the borough over the Christmas and New Year period.

As well as assisting the lead agencies such as Lancashire County Council and the Environment Agency, and the police and fire service, the borough council has been cleaning up sludge and debris from the roads and footways.

And they are continuing to help residents dispose of furniture and other household goods damaged by floods.

Council vehicles will visit areas affected by the flooding to collect materials such as carpets and furniture and dispose of them. This will be a free service and the visits will take place on specific dates up to January 31.

Councillor Kevin Wilkie,the council's portfolio holder for street scene, said: "The council is very sympathetic to residents affected by the floods caused by the recent heavy rains. I am very pleased that we are able to offer this free service to residents to help them at this difficult time."

Councillor Kevin Wilkie

The authority has a record of properties that have been reported as having suffered internal flooding. Vehicles will be visiting those areas as follows:

- Mondays January 11, 18 and 25 – Parbold area.
- Tuesdays January 12, 19 and 26 – Other areas affected by the floods.
- Wednesdays January 13, 20, and 27 – Ormskirk area.
- Fridays January, 15, 22, and 29 January – Burscough area.

Residents will have to bring the goods out of the houses themselves or make arrangements for this to be done. They should also ensure that they have no further need for the goods, e.g. for any insurance claim.

Council staff are not able to enter people's homes to remove goods.

For more details call the council on 01695 577177.

If your home suffered internal flooding due to heavy rains between Christmas and New Year and you haven't already informed the council you can email EnvHealth. Admin @westlancs.gov.uk.

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Try your hand at American Football

EVER fancied trying your hand at American Football? Now's your chance.

North West–based outfit The Merseyside Nighthawks are offering complete novices the opportunity to sample the sport at three training camps – including one in Skelmersdale – over consecutive Sundays in January with the help of current Great Britain coaches and players.

The second session will be held at Skelmersdale's JMO Sports Park on Sunday, January 17.

For the last three seasons, the Nighthawks have been hosting pre–season rookie tours throughout Merseyside aimed at giving complete beginners the chance to learn the basics and see if it is something they want to pursue further.

The Merseyside Nighthawks in action

As a direct result of the camps the Nighthawks have discovered players who have contributed to their success over the last two seasons which has seen them unbeaten through 2014 and 2015.

Head coach, Craig Pennington, said: "Rookie camps have a vital importance to our team, it engages new athletes with our sport and every year it has strengthened our squad."

Council set to continue cycle to work scheme

Report by **Henry James**

THE Skelmersdale and Up Holland (Re)Cycle to Work Scheme which allows employees to apply for a grant to buy a reconditioned bike to travel to some of the difficult to reach industrial estates in Skelmersdale is set to be continued, although with some changes.

West Lancs Council's cabinet was due to discuss the project at a meeting last night (Tuesday, January 12).

Applicants to the scheme must live in the Skelmersdale and Up Holland area and work or have an offer of employment on the Pimbo industrial estate or White Moss Business Park and be on an annual salary of less than £25,000.

The cabinet scheduled to decide on recommendations to increase the funding to the nominated supplier (Total Reuse) from £50 to £100 and to give them a 'springboard' grant of £800 to improve their stock availability.

Total Reuse have been buying the bikes for about £55 and paying £15 for safety equipment while receiving £50 from the borough council resulting in a loss of £20 prompting the authority to look again at the money they give to the initiative.

Potential

There have been 53 applications for reconditioned bikes in the first 18 months of the scheme and the cost to date has been £1,000 (£650 in 2015/16 and £350 in 2014/15).

The borough's assistant director of planning, John Harrison believes the project can continue, writing: "The (Re)Cycle to Work Scheme has the potential to provide some real benefits to the local community, by providing an affordable and sustainable alternative transport solution, facilitating access to employment, promoting health and exercise, improving the environment and supporting local employment.

"Despite the low take–up of the scheme, it is expected that there will remain an interest in it from new and existing employees.

"Whilst it is recognised that the scheme is not performing as well as hoped, its low management time and low costs mean that the scheme can continue to operate with little impact on council resources.

"S106 monies remain available to fund and sustain the scheme, and the low cost of the scheme means that a large proportion of S106 monies will remain available for use on other transport schemes."

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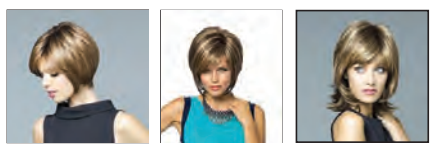

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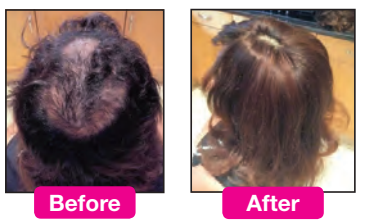
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Call to highlight unsung heroes

MANAGEMENT of a care home group with a home in Skelmersdale are aiming to highlight the unsung heroes of social care who often go the extra mile to ensure the service keeps going for older people, the vulnerable and seriously ill.

Donna Briggs, managing director of Springhill Care Group, which operates the Birch Green home in Ivydale, said: "Very often these committed, kind and caring individuals are the only people a vulnerable person may see from one day to the next.

"There is also the support they provide for families and friends of the people they care for as they help them to cope with the illness or disability their loved one is battling day in day out.

"It's important that we as an industry value the care sector and its 1.48million employees who are committed to making life better for vulnerable people each and every day."

The group is inviting those with an interest in the issue to join the conversation on Twitter by using the hashtag caringheroes.

From filing clerk to partner!

Report by **Henry James**

A SKELMERSDALE–based firm of solicitors has announced a hard–earned promotion within the company.

Eleven years after joining Scott Rees & Co. as a filing clerk, Chris Connor has worked his way up the company ladder to become a partner.

After opting out of A–levels to begin his career in law from scratch in 2004, Chris decided to attend night school in Ormskirk to continue his education, all the while progressing within the firm by gaining promotion to junior file handler, getting more involved in case management and earning his stripes through hands–on–experience.

Taking an alternative route into the profession by completing a CILEX course to become a chartered legal executive over a six–year period, Chris was rewarded with further promotion to team leader.

Hands–on experience working from file management to the team leader role, allowed Chris to impart valuable insight to the lesser experienced members of staff to help with their progression, allowing him to give back to the company while continuing his climb.

Chris Connor

A further year of team leadership following his graduation gave the senior partners every confidence in rewarding his efforts and in November 2012 he was promoted to associate solicitor.

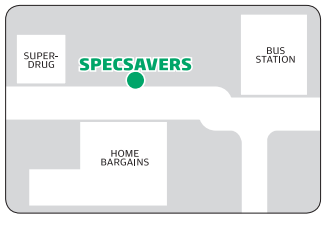
And continuing commitment and dedication did not go unnoticed culminating three years later with the offer of a partnership.

Now acknowledged as one of the most experienced and trusted members of staff at Scott Rees & Co., Chris said: "I'm truly happy to be able to have worked my way from handling the files back in college, to representing those clients' cases. I've learned so much from working with some fantastic people here.

"When I first started I didn't imagine my journey taking me this far but I'm glad I've been able to do it all within the walls of Scott Rees & Co. This new position will be a challenge but one I'm more than prepared to keep working hard and I hope to pass on my experience to anybody trying to do the same."

Scott Rees & Co. managing partner, Royston Smith, commented: "We would like to take this opportunity to both congratulate Chris and thank him for all of his hard work and dedication during his time with the firm.

"His promotion to partner is thoroughly well deserved and we are certain that he will have a huge part to play in the firm's future progress. Chris's journey up the promotional ladder sets a fantastic example to all of his colleagues and a standard for them to aspire to."



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Men–Aces served up festive helping hand for food bank

Mim Eaton with some of the Men–Aces in their festive gear

MEMBERS of the Skem Men–Aces disability football team did their bit for the Digmoor food bank over the festive season with a Soccer Santa event.

The team's Santa Dash got called off due to bad weather but in true Men–Aces style it didn't dampen their spirits and instead they held a training session with a difference.

All the lads donned seasonal attire and brought items of food which were collected together to make hampers.

They managed to make 13 wonderful hampers and several bags of food.

The food was collected by Margaret Huyton of Digmoor food bank, which opened its doors on Christmas Day.

Mim Eaton from the Men–Aces said: "Our fundraiser helped people go home with a few treats to see them through the festive season. This was a special event and another experience for the lads and made them aware of other people's problems."

Got a story? Ring the News Desk on 01704 392400

Angela's hoping to be an inspiration

By **Henry James**

THE New Year is a time when many people resolve to lose weight and get in shape and one woman who did just that is hoping her example can prove an inspiration for others to do the same.

When Angela Garth from Skelmersdale made her New Year's resolution to lose weight she had no idea how successful she would be. But, with the support of her local Slimming World group she has managed to shed more than seven stones.

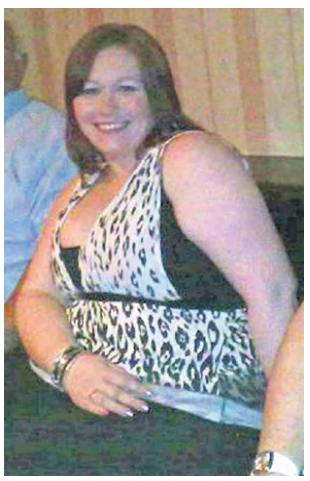
The 30–year–old had battled with her weight for much of her life and had tried to lose the pounds but struggled, often feeling hungry and deprived before eventually giving up and regaining the weight she lost – and more!

At her heaviest she weighed 18st 6lb and suffered from mobility problems and low self–confidence.

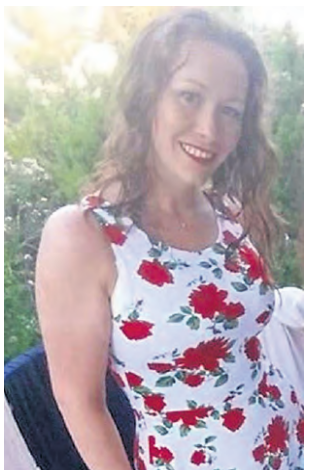
Finally, she decided to join her local Slimming World group.

Angela said: "I was so nervous when I first joined that I made my mum come to group with me for moral support.

"I needn't have worried though, everyone was so friendly and welcoming. I instantly felt at home and was surprised too by how many familiar faces there were!



Angela before...



...and now

"It really is a little community, everyone is so supportive, even when you have had a difficult week. It's nice to be around people who genuinely want you to succeed."

And after starting to slim down, Angela felt confident enough to start being more active too.

She added: "Before starting Slimming World my confidence was at an all–time low. Now though my life is completely different, I love buying new clothes – which is a good thing because I'm shrinking out of them fast – and I can definitely be found posing for the camera. This summer I wore shorts on my holiday for the first time in a decade."

Slimming World team developer, Tina Whewell, added: "Angela is proof that with small, manageable changes to the way you cook and eat and the right support it's possible to make your New Year's resolutions a reality."

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Council's options are limited – that's a fact!

MR Carter (Letters, December 9) thinks I need to think before putting finger to keyboard. I promise him I do think and check my facts as well.

I am not sure exactly what promises he feels the council has broken but many of the things he raised in his first letter were either never promised by the council or by the New Town Corporation and again the council was not responsible.

He compares Skelmersdale to a number of towns including Southport and Wigan. Only Burscough of the towns he mentions is smaller than Skelmersdale and its railway stations have been there since the 1850s and I don't think the council can claim the credit for those decisions.

In fact, Skelmersdale had a station from about the same period but sadly that station was closed in 1956 and when the New Town came it became Railway Road and a traffic island. None of that was the local council's fault.

Burscough's library is a lot smaller and has fewer opening hours and for the record Ormskirk railway station is a shadow of its former self as long–standing residents of West Lancashire can confirm.

He wants lower shop rents but the council do not set the rents, they are set by private landlords. So, he is calling for the council to subsidise rents in Skelmersdale but where will the money come from? Given that the government is slashing grants to local councils that is not very likely. Equally it will not go down well in the rest of the district.

I said the council does not run everything and he wonders who does. The answers depend on the service, but the NHS is run by central government through local commissioning boards and hospital trusts; railways are run either by private companies who run the trains or Network Rail which runs the infrastructure.

The Concourse is run by a private company and the previous administration at West Lancashire privatised the running of leisure such as Nye Bevan Pool. So West Lancashire Borough Council has few teeth and little direct management responsibility for the things Mr Carter wants. It can shout for things but its ability to deliver those things is very limited.

The fact is that Skelmersdale is increasingly at the mercy of private companies in one guise or another and so it becomes not a matter of what Skelmersdale people deserve but rather can they provide companies with a profit. And given the scale of cuts to local government in coming years there will be less services not more.

Chris Cheetham, by email

Forest of 'to let' signs is an eyesore and a danger

TWElFTH Night is when people traditionally take their Christmas decorations and lights down – outdoor lights, subtle or kitsch, which brighten up for a few weeks the dark winter nights. As most people who put lights up cannot see them once they draw the curtains they surely switch them on for the benefit and pleasure of the community.

The same cannot be said for the forest of 'to let' signs that now go up every year outside student accommodation and stay there for months, in and around Ormskirk, and are an eyesore and do nothing whatsoever for the community or the appearance of the town.

Given the recent increase in the storm–force winds we have been experiencing these flimsy signs have also become a safety issue. One close to me was blown down, both sign and post, in the strong winds before Christmas. Luckily it fell into the driveway and not the pavement or road, causing a serious accident. But upon seeing it lying in the driveway the landlord attempted to position it across the hedge, over the pavement, without any means of it being secured. Until I pointed out that winds of 50 to 60mph had been forecast.

When most of the students find their accommodation through the university or online are these 'to let' signs really necessary, when they do nothing to enhance the appearance of the town or, I suspect, find tenants, or do these landlords and agencies put them up purposley to irritate?

H. Pennington, Ormskirk

PICTURE of the week

www.champnews.com/pixonline

Old trees make a dunce fence

National Trust rangers are once again appealing for people to bring their used real Christmas trees down to Formby where they will be dug in to create a half–mile 'dune fence' which will encourage the growth of marram grass to help reduce the effects of erosion on the sand dunes.

Picture by Martyn Snape.

Code: 01087181

Our village is getting a raw deal

LAST year Up Holland lost our Post Office. No doubt within the next six months we will also lose our library.

Skelmersdale always appears to take up any resources allocated to this area of the borough and to what end? It still lacks identity, still has a feel of a a declining town….and it still needs a railway station!

I and many other locals do not associate ourselves with Skelmersdale and accordingly gravitate towards the neighbouring towns of Wigan and St Helens for their retail, social and leisure pursuits.

In short, we are a village on the periphery of West Lancashire which is getting a raw deal both from West Lancashire Borough Council and Lancashire County Council.

What really concerns me is that I can't think of any solutions that have a chance of succeeding and reversing this picture.

The two councils could and should spend more within the village itself.

My solution? If at all possible the village of Up Holland should join a council like Wigan or St Helens where our voices would have a better chance of being heard and where hopefully we would be able to acquire some resources in order to ensure that the village remains a strong and vibrant community.

J. Gallagher, Up Holland

Prevention is key to averting floods

NATIONAL and regional reports of flooding in the west of Lancashire have focused mainly on Croston, where the River Douglas broke through flood defences.

However, there have been smaller–scale incidents across this part of Lancashire and into Southport and Maghull. When drainage systems cannot cope flooding results.

The consequences of flooding have been amply demonstrated by television images but the ongoing costs of cleaning up can only be imagined. Government regularly turns a blind eye to the benefits of prevention, preferring instead to leave local people and the insurance companies to deal with them.

What the government ignores is that these costs are carried partly by the whole community through insurance premiums and partly by the unfortunate people whose lives have been ruined.

Some areas are regularly experiencing flooding conditions that government departments predicted would occur only once in a hundred years. Western Lancashire is flat, with significant tracts of land at, or below, sea level. The Environment Agency has given notice that in the summer of 2017 it will cease to maintain part of the network of drainage pumping stations that protects our area; further reductions in support will follow at intervals. There is no agreement about successor arrangements.

People might think this is someone else's problem but it affects us all. When fields are flooded, roads get flooded, railway and canal embankments collapse and electricity and communications networks fail. Just imagine being trapped in a flooded home with no power, no telephone, no internet, and no means of transport for weeks at a time. That could have happened in recent weeks, but for the local drainage network.

Roger Clayton, Lathom

Hospital car parking charges cause distress to vulnerable patients

YOUR article on hospital car parking charges made by the Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Trust raised an important issue which deserves further attention.

Vast sums of money are involved and the answers given are opaque. Meanwhile, they are the cause of distress and uncertainty to patients attending hospital for treatment, particularly those coping with a life–threatening illness such as cancer.

Such patients in receipt of vital treatments such as radiotherapy and chemotherapy will often have to make frequent visits to hospital. The ensuing charges adds to their stress and are a challenge to a core principle of the NHS that treatment should be free at the point of entry.

There are unacceptable variations in the cost of charges required by hospital trusts, both nationwide and locally. In Scotland hospital car parking charges were abolished in 2008. In Wales, there are only two health boards which have car parking charges. Locally, Whiston Teaching Hospital and Aintree University Hospitals waive charges for cancer patients making regular visits for treatment.

Why are patients visiting Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals experiencing discriminatory charges? Has it something to do with the quality of service provided? Hardly, given that two of the leading cancer treatment centres in the North West, Clatterbridge and Christies, are able to offer a high–quality, well–regarded service free of charge to patients.

It's about time Southport and Ormskirk Trust adopted a similar policy.

Brian Donnelly, committee chair, Firm Roots Trust charity, working in conjunction with Macmillan to provide spiritual, personal and practical support to cancer patients

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Trust team welcome launch of sugar–measuring app

A NEW app has been launched by health chiefs to encourage people to cut down on their sugar intake.

The Fit Squad at Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust has welcomed the new app, released by Public Health England, which will show how much sugar is in everyday food and drink.

The free app works by scanning the barcode of products and revealing the amount of total sugar the product contains in cubes and grams. The new app comes as it was announced that a third of 10 and 11–year–olds and more than a fifth of four and five–year–olds were overweight or obese.

Tracy Sutton, healthy lifestyles service manager at the trust, said: "'The app is a great, quick and easy way to find out just how much sugar we are consuming in our everyday diet. It also contains information about how much sugar a person should have and provides information about sugar swaps and alternative options.

"As obesity figures rise, it's never been more important to improve the health and wellbeing of ourselves and our family. On average each year obesity costs the NHS over five billion pounds and that figure is due to rise each year."

The team at the trust provides a free weight management and physical activity programme and can be contacted by email at lcn–tr.healthylifestyles@nhs.net or by phone on 01772 644158.

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Alert system developed at Edge Hill will provide support for end–of–life carers

Professor Barbara Jack

Report by **Henry James**

AN alert system developed at Edge Hill University designed to assess the needs of people caring for terminally ill loved ones, has featured in the recently published National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Better Endings report.

The Carers' Alert Thermometer (CAT) is a simple screening tool, developed with more than 245 carers and professionals from around the North West, that aims to provide an alert to potential areas of burden that carers are experiencing and trigger interventions where appropriate.

The CAT is a response to a major research study that informed the Better Endings report, undertaken at Edge Hill University and funded by the NIHR. The study found that support received by unpaid family carers could be a significant factor in what happens to terminally ill people, particularly those with cancer, at the end of their lives.

Professor Barbara Jack, director of Edge Hill's evidence–based Practice Research Centre, said the Better Endings report provides important insight into the issues facing those on the front–line of palliative care.

She said: "Prior to commencing the research project, it had become apparent that an increasing number of cancer patients, who had elected to die at home, were being admitted to hospital in their last days of life.

Initiatives

"While honouring people's final wishes and helping them die with dignity is common to all carers' motivations, it was identified that in many cases carer fatigue played a pivotal role in end if life hospitalisation.

"The CAT has been designed to help carers and professionals identify breakdown behaviours and risk areas before they escalate, helping many more terminally ill people avoid hospitalisation during their final days."

Better Endings is the first such report to bring together evidence on a single topic from across the NIHR. The review is being launched at an event taking place at the Kings Fund in London, which will be attended by NHS clinicians, commissioners, patients and researchers.

The themed review aims to help NHS decision makers by presenting the findings of 17 NIHR studies in a clear and comprehensive way. It also highlights 12 pieces of ongoing NIHR funded research that are evaluating new and existing care initiatives, such as 'hospice at home' and a new data sharing service to improve continuity of care.

The CAT research team included Dr Katherine Knighting, Dr Mary O'Brien, Professor Brenda Roe from Edge Hill University, Professor Mike Nolan (University of Sheffield), Professor Mari Lloyd–Williams (University of Liverpool), Dr Rob Gandy (independent consultant), and Kirsty Pine (Liverpool Care Commissioning Group).

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Chance to learn about Viking links

THERE is a chance for local residents to learn more about West Lancashire's links with the Vikings at a meeting later this year.

Professor Steven Harding from the University of Nottingham will be joined by a team of Viking experts who will speak and answer questions at the meeting to be held in Ormskirk Civic Hall, Southport Road, on Wednesday, March 16 starting at 7pm.

In addition to Professor Harding the speakers will include David Griffiths, reader in archaeology at Oxford University and Judith Jesch, professor of Viking Study at the University of Nottingham.

Robert Ireland from the West Lancashire Heritage Association said: "This promises to be a most interesting and fascinating evening for residents of West Lancashire, Sefton and Merseyside – whatever their own ancestral story."

In 2002, Professor and his team conducted a survey, looking for the Viking 'Y' chromosome in men from the area. DNA samples were taken from male volunteers who had old Lancashire names and were able to prove their forefathers were living in West Lancashire before 1700.

These genetic tests on West Lancashire male residents showed that DNA types common in Norway and Denmark were also found here, suggesting the origin of the Vikings who came here.

This area was chosen because of the existence of many Scandinavian place names in Sefton and West Lancashire – such as Formby, Crosby, Kirkby, Skelmersdale and Ormskirk – and also on the Wirral.

Their new findings about Viking Lancashire will be the theme of the talk in March and it's hoped the evening will be well attended by the local communities.

For more information or to order tickets ring Patrick on 01695 573350 or email trishandbob1@talktalk.net.

Council leisure chief's call to put on your walking shoes!

Report by **Danielle Thompson**

WEST Lancs residents are being urged to invest in some comfortable walking shoes and join the council's GP referral officers on a series of short, sociable walks across different locations in the borough in the new year.

The council's health walks are open to all, are approximately an hour long and a well–earned cuppa awaits at the end.

Councillor Yvonne Gagen, the council's portfolio holder for leisure, said: "If you want to be fitter and healthier in 2016 then our health walks can really help you with that. So let your feet hit the street and come and join the walkers – a warm welcome awaits and there's no need to book, just turn up!"

Meeting points and times for the walks, which started again this week, are as follows:

• Tuesdays, 10am to 11am, starting from the bowling pavilion at Richmond Park, Burscough.

• Wednesdays, 1 to 2pm, starting from the bowling pavilion at Coronation Park, Ormskirk.

• Thursdays, 10am to 11am from Banks Leisure Centre, Banks.

Walkers are advised to wear suitable clothing and footwear for the weather and ground conditions.

For more information, contact the West Lancs GP Referral Officer on 01695 555804 or 01695 585145.

Meanwhile, a new series of monthly advanced health walks will be starting in February.

Led by West Lancashire Parks and Countryside Ranger Service, the walks will be between four and six miles in length, exploring different parts of the local countryside and discovering the wildlife that can be found across West Lancashire.

Councillor Yvonne Gagen

The first advanced walk will be at Fairy Glen, Appley Bridge starting at 10am on Monday, February 1.

Fairy Glen is a wonderful countryside site situated on the side of Parbold Hill and the main entrance can be accessed from the A5209. There is free parking in a layby opposite the site.

All extended health walks take place on the first Monday of the month and meeting time is 10am. Due to the advanced nature of these walks it is advised that you wear suitable sturdy footwear with ankle support.

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NFU warning over pumps closure risk

By **Danielle Thompson**

AN environment expert from the National Farmers Union (NFU) has warned that an urgent solution needs to be found for flooding issues in West Lancashire and Sefton before the Alt Crossens pumps are turned off by the Environment Agency in summer 2017.

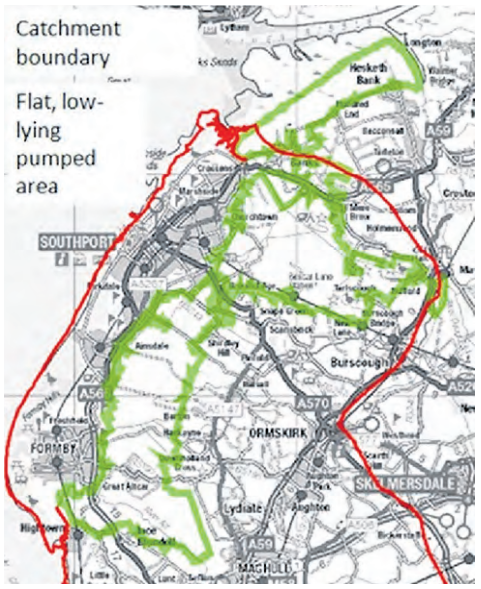
The agency has released a map showing which low–lying areas currently kept clear by five flood–preventing pumps at Banks Marsh, Boundary Brook, Kew, Rufford Causeway and Clay Brow which could be at risk of flooding when funding for the pumps is axed in July 2017.

Alice Richards, environment and land use advisor for the NFU, told the Champion that unless an Internal Drainage Board (IBD) is formed, the areas between Hesketh Bank in the north to Great Altcar in the south would be at risk of flooding. The IRB would manage water levels and undertake work to reduce flooding risks to take over running the pumps.

Much of the board's work would involve maintaining and improving watercourses and related infrastructure such as pumping stations, weirs, sluices, culverts and embankments within their drainage districts.

The IDB could cost up to £800,000 with half the funding coming from 'drainage rates' paid by local landowners, while the other half would come from a special levy contributed by local authorities on behalf of non–land managers in the area.

Alice Richards said: "The Environment Agency's map shows the areas which would be at risk and although the agency says that homes would not be flooded, gardens would, as would roads, businesses and several hundred acres of grade one agricultural land.



The Environment Agency's map shows (in green) the areas at risk of flooding.

"The effect of this would be felt in the surrounding areas as well. Food production would be severely affected; transport would be difficult and those living in the affected area would really suffer with some parts permanently flooded.

"An IDB would be the best solution. The farming community understands and will give their financial backing to their part of the cost – the local authority needs to support it too or the whole community will suffer."

• *MP renews call for IDB – Page 28*

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Cloudy2Clear service the Crosby, Litherland, Aintree, Maghull, Walton, Anfield, Netherton, Bootle, Formby, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale areas & Paul is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. *'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'*

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Have your say on borough community health services

THERE is still time for West Lancashire patients to give their views on community health services across the borough.

As part of its ongoing re–procurement of the community services contract, NHS West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) would like to know what is working well locally and what could be improved.

Community health services includes district nurses, community matrons, podiatry, dieticians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, treatment room services and end–of–life care teams.

It also includes urgent care such as GP out–of–hours services and walk–in centres.

The deadline for submitting your views is Friday, January 22. To comment go to www.surveymonkey.com /r/joinedupcare.

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County chief seeks input on savings

County Councillor Jennifer Mein

LANCASHIRE County Council chiefs are urging residents of the county to have their say on how the authority plans to tackle the "huge savings" it needs to make.

Over the next five years to 2020/21 the county council must deliver savings of £262m on top of those agreed within previous budget processes.

The first of a series of consultations has now been launched, on plans for the library service, the withdrawal of subsidy for local bus services and ceasing to provide countryside services.

There will also be opportunities to comment on the budget proposals as a whole and for community groups to express an interest in taking over council buildings or services.

Further consultations will be launched shortly.

Leader of the council, County Councillor Jennifer Mein, said: "We face an unprecedented financial challenge as a result of relentless cuts in central government funding combined with a rising demand for our services and we now have to take a number of very difficult decisions.

"We know that based on current spending and forecast demand for services, the council will not have sufficient financial resources to meet its statutory obligations by April 2018 and will need to rely heavily on spending its reserves in order to set a balanced budget for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

"Our main priority is protecting the most vulnerable in our society and that obviously influences how we will make the necessary savings.

"The council can clearly not afford to continue delivering all of the services it does now, so this is a hard issue for councillors and our communities alike to face up to. However, we are open to any ideas that people may have on how we can lessen the impact of savings and I would urge people to have their say."

Full details of the consultation process are available at the Lancashire County Council website at www.lancashire.gov.uk, under Budget proposal consultation.

Prince's Trust spots up for grabs

YOUNG people aged 16 to 25 are being urged to sign up to a scheme which aims to give them the skills to help them to move into employment, further education or training.

The Ormskirk branch of the Prince's Trust team programme still has places on the next 12–week development course, Team 10, starting on Monday, January 18.

As well as taking part in a fully–paid, four–day residential project, members of the team are placed in a suitable two–week work environment which will enable them to gain valuable experience and an appropriate reference.

Volunteers also gain a qualification at the conclusion, along with other certificates. Taking part in the programme will not affect Jobseekers' benefits.

The team will be based at Ormskirk College on Hants Lane and the project will run until Friday, April 8.

For more details contact team leader Jonathon Marlow on 07870 168529 or email jonathon.marlow@westlancs.ac.uk.

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School applications deadline

PARENTS whose children are due to start primary school in 2016 are reminded that the closing date for online applications to Lancashire County Council's website is midnight on Friday (January 15).

Applications need to be submitted for all children starting school in the autumn, even if the child has an older brother or sister at the school of your choice.

For more information, visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/schools or call 01772 532191 or 01772 532190.

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Water company seeks to enlist leak–spotters

Dog walkers and joggers urged to look out for tell–tale signs

OFFICIALS at water company United Utilities are hoping to recruit a team of unofficial 'inspectors' to help tackle the problem of leaks.

They are calling on members of the public to keep their eyes peeled for evidence of water leaks and to report any suspicious puddles.

And they are particularly keen to encourage dog walkers, joggers and regular walkers to be on the look–out as they pound the pavements of the region.

Leakage reports can be made by calling free on 0800 330033; using an online form at www.unitedutilities.com, or tweeting the United Utilities @unitedutilities using hashtag UULeakline

In an 'average' week the water company fixes around 450 leaks, although this can rise to about 750 during cold snaps.

And although they reckon to be able to pinpoint approximately 60% of leaks as they occur, with some 26,000 miles of pipes to monitor it is not always possible to know about each one.

As a result, the public's help is key and the company believes dog walkers might be an ideal group to take the lead.

Dave Briers, water network delivery manager at United Utilities, said: "There are many different causes of leaks. For example, they could be due to ground movement caused by heavy traffic or freezing conditions; tree roots can also damage pipes over time, as can building work. They can occur anywhere at any time.

"Members of the public who walk specific routes regularly are ideally placed to spot a leak developing and, unlike motorists, are also likely to have their phones at the ready to tweet or message us so that we can get our team investigating. Reports like this are a massive help."

Meanwhile the company has launched a new infographic and video to explain what happens when a leak has been reported.

To view the infographic and Leakline video, visit www.unitedutilities.com /customer–cafe.

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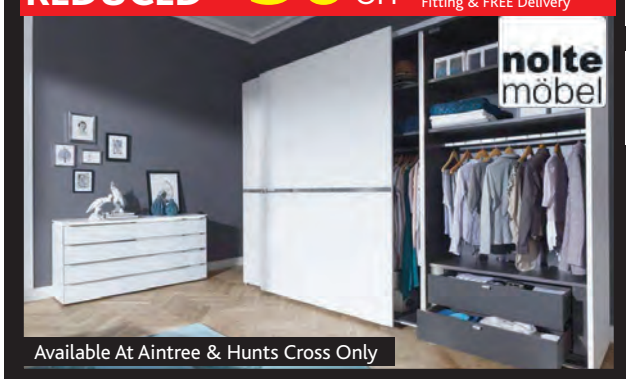

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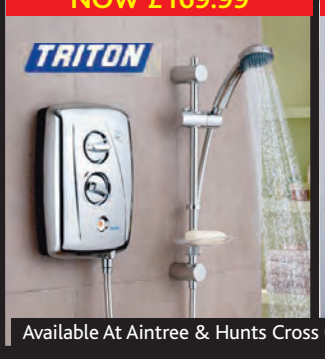

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Quit Squad on hand to help smokers give habit the boot

A SPECIAL team of health workers are encouraging smokers in West Lancashire to make 2016 the year they make a step towards a smokefree future.

The Quit Squad, Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust's stop smoking service, offers one–to–one sessions, drop–in clinics with no appointment needed, nicotine replacement therapies, stop smoking products and support and advice to those who want to stop smoking.

The service also provides assistance for those who use other tobacco products as well as cigarettes, including shisha, and also welcome users of e–cigarettes to help them quit nicotine for good.

The New Year is a great opportunity to quit the habit for good with the help of the service.

Julie Trezise, Quit Squad Service manager at Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We all start the New Year with the best of intentions and stopping smoking is a popular resolution to pledge.

"You're five times more likely to quit for good with the help of your local stop smoking service than using willpower alone.

"Smoking continues to be a major preventable cause of premature death and disease in England however with the help of our dedicated and friendly team we can help you make this year the year of a new, smokefree you."

To contact the team you can call Freephone 0800 328 6297 or call 01254 283370 or 01772 644474.

For more information you can also log on to their website at www.quitsquad.nhs.uk.

Our West Lancashire mark first anniversary

OFFICIALS of the new independent party in the borough, Our West Lancashire, have marked the first anniversary of its formation by claiming a growing membership and issuing an annual report charting its impact in 2015.

The party's founder, Councillor Adrian Owens, said: "We've seen an increase in our membership as the year has gone on as more and more civic–minded people are recognising what we are trying to achieve.

"Our 2015 annual report details the impact that we have had, and, as we move into 2016, we will step up our efforts to ensure that the local councils put residents' interests first before party political dogma."

One of the group's new members is Amanda Shaw, who runs a small business from her home and also hosts informal monthly business networking events in Ormskirk under the Evolve Business Networking banner with all profits going to charity.

Amanda said: "I've joined Our West Lancashire as they are highlighting concerns and issues ignored by the main two parties.

"It was Our West Lancashire who first pointed out that having two managing directors at the same time as the council were cutting services was wrong.

"They have also championed a greater say for residents at council meetings, led the fight to protect Park Pool and they roll up their sleeves with their community action days to make the area cleaner and greener."

Amanda Shaw

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Pupils from Burscough St John's Catholic Primary School who judged the winner of the Best Christmas Window Display Code1086771

Primary pupils judge Best Christmas Window Display

PUPILS at Burscough St John's Catholic Primary School were given a special 'project' over the festive period – they were asked to judge the winners in the village's Best Christmas Window Display organised by Burscough Parish Council.

They visited local businesses to view the entries then sat down over a cup of hot chocolate at the Infusions Café to decide the winner.

And after careful deliberation they presented the trophy to Marci Robinson of Villages in Partnership charity shop on Liverpool Road North for their Christmas Eve–themed display.

Meanwhile, West Lancashire Civic Trust also held an Ormskirk Town Centre Christmas Window Display Promotion and certificates of merit were awarded to Pandora's Box on Wheatsheaf Walk, Scrumptious Cakes on Church Walk, Belle Boutique on Church Walk, Cottage Crafts on Church View Courts off Burscough Street, and Andrew Collinge on Wheatsheaf Walk.

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MP repeats call for drainage board to avert flood misery

ROSIE Cooper has urged action to prevent future flooding in West Lancashire by reiterating her call for the creation of an Internal Drainage Board IIRB).

The Environment Agency is scheduled to halt funding for flood–preventing pumps at Banks Marsh, Boundary Brook, Kew, Rufford Causeway and Clay Brow from July 2017.

And the West Lancs MP has written to the Prime Minister and ministers at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to call for investment in an IRB to manage water levels and work to reduce flooding risks.

Homes and farm land across West Lancashire were devastated by flooding in 2012 and the borough was badly hit again by storms Eva and Frank over Christmas and the New Year and Ms Cooper believes the situation will become more dire once the pumps are turned off next summer.

She said: "My heart goes out to every West Lancashire resident who has been affected by flooding over the Christmas period. Flood water causes considerable damage in a short time but it takes significantly longer to repair the damage.

Rosie Cooper

"The government can't talk of its concern about flooding whilst trying to ignore the effects of their own actions in cutting the budgets of local councils, police, fire service and organisations.

"Having been responsible for causing the Environment Agency to take this decision, the government has refused all calls to help with the costs of setting up an Internal Drainage Board and all the relevant agencies have reached a stalemate.

"We simply cannot have each agency, council and the government pointing fingers at each other because they themselves don't have to endure the human misery and personal cost of homes, of businesses being flooded and produce lost as farmers' fields are underwater.

"We have to recognise that this flooding happened with the pumps working. Besides retaining the satellite pumps, we need additional investment to tackle flooding in this area. We need a commitment to tackle flooding problems which requires investment and a promise from the Prime Minister that he won't make things worse by allowing the pumps to be switched off.

"It appears there are still issues about co–ordinated responses to the flooding, residents not knowing where to turn or not receiving any help when they needed it. This was one of the main problems in 2012 and a lesson that has not been learnt."

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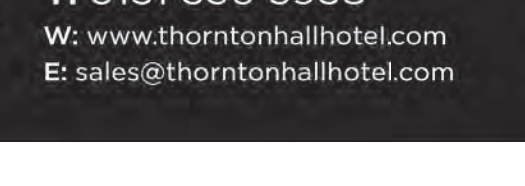

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‘New morality’? Give me the Sixties any day!

I CONFESS, I regularly watch soaps Emmerdale and Corry.

Not to the extent that it would upset me to miss an episode or two, though one can lose the thread rather when one character or another (normally quite ordinary folk supposed not to have much spare cash) suddenly jets off to Spain or some such. Always with no prior warning and to visit various sons, daughters or never before heard of friends, often missing important events in their lives such as weddings or, indeed, Christmas.

But it was the Christmas soap antics that got me thinking about ethics and morality, as you do from time to time.

I came through adolescence and young manhood during the ‘Swinging Sixties’ – and though I was never a Mod or a Rocker, I must have absorbed the general ideas of love and sex prevalent then – and it seems to me that in general they actually seem far more ‘moral’ in many ways than the modern mixed–up ideas of good and bad.

I don’t know what might be going on in the East End, though I bet it’s much the same, but in the soaps representing this end of the country the idea seems to be that changing your wife or partner (another word that is now misused, rather like gay) very nearly as often as most folk wash their car, is perfectly OK. But a surreptitious kiss is apparently absolutely beyond the pale and a good reason to end an otherwise happy marriage.

It seems to me that the 60s attitudes were simply more straightforward and honest than the strange, confused attitudes of today. I know I am straying into rocky waters here, but what folk these days do not seem capable of doing anymore is to differentiate between sex and love properly.

I grew up in a world where the odd kiss and cuddle, though obviously asking for trouble if your marriage partner became aware of it, was certainly not grounds for a massive break–up.

And then we have this modern ‘excuse’ for trotting off into the arms of another – “I can’t trust you anymore.” Like so many things these days, this appears to be a phrase which has subtly changed its meaning to suit our ‘new morality.’

Of course trust is vital in any partnership. But to say (and this happened in Corry fairly recently) that you are ending what until then was a happy marriage because your spouse lied about whether or not he had been in the pub is frankly beyond belief. Or beyond mine anyway.

You could perhaps excuse this if we had become a people who stand up for the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. But the same soaps in which it is getting difficult to work out who is actually shacking up with who, or whose children they actually are, seem quite happy to condone car theft, thievery – even murder – without turning a hair.

Oh, I’m sorry, in Emmerdale at the moment the character Debbie has just driven off into the sunset for the fairly good reason that her fiancé has just confessed to attempted murder. Unfortunately to someone else.

So the moral (!) of this story is tell your girlfriend you are a failed murderer before anyone else or you’ll be deemed untrustworthy. Confess all and you can be forgiven.

She didn’t think about telling the police though.

Unacceptable behaviour? Give me the ‘free love’ Sixties any day of the week.

County council in plea for more foster carers

LANCASHIRE County Council is seeking to recruit more foster carers to help turn around the lives of children in care.

The authority is keen to enlist more people in the county willing to provide stable homes for teenagers and groups of siblings and give them the love and support they deserve while they can’t live with their own families.

A package of support is available to help foster carers in their role, including local support groups, their own social worker and a support worker to offer advice, support and guidance.

Meanwhile, out–of–office hours support is also available through a dedicated helpline staffed by experienced social workers.

Training is flexible, including during school hours, evenings and weekends, as well as online, and can be tailored to the needs of any child.

County Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, Lancashire’s cabinet member for children, young people and schools, said: “We are looking for people who can foster all ages of children, particularly brothers and sisters who need to stay together and teenagers. It’s a challenging and rewarding role, but you won’t be on your own, we offer lots of support.

“We give first priority for child placements to our own foster carers over agency carers. We can fast–track foster carers who are transferring from other agencies through our approval process.

“I am always delighted to hear stories of how our foster carers have made a marked difference in a child or young person’s life and helped them reach their potential. I recently heard about one woman and her husband who have fostered a 13–year–old boy and the experience has enriched all their lives.”

Anyone interested in finding out more about fostering is encouraged to contact the county council’s friendly team on 0300 123 6723 or visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/fostering.

County Councillor Tomlinson

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Last chance to enter business awards

BUSINESSES in West Lancs have until midnight Friday (January 15) to enter the annual Red Rose Awards.

The awards will crown the county's best firms across 26 categories.

The 2015 event, organised by Lancashire Business View magazine, attracted more than 1,000 entrants.

Magazine publisher, Richard Slater, said: "We are giving businesses in Lancashire the chance to shout about what they do and why they are the best at it – and we hope they'll grasp that opportunity with both hands by entering."

The charity partner for the Red Rose Awards 2016 is Cash for Kids and funds will be raised at the awards event to support their work.

To take part in awards, visit www.redroseawards.co.uk. Winners will be announced at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool on March 10.

Young readers hit the gold trail

A TRIO of young book lovers are the latest to strike gold on the Lancashire Reading Trail.

Sisters Emily, 11, and nine–year–old Isabel Wareing, along with seven–year–old Ben Attwood, completed the challenge at Burscough Library by reading and reviewing 50 books each, receiving a gold certificate and free book from library staff for their efforts.

Library manager, Carol Young, said: "The children have all enjoyed taking part and have collected stickers, bookmarks and certificates along the way. Well done to the three of them."

If your child would like to take part, find out more at www.lancashire.gov.uk.

Above: Emily and Isabel with their certificates and books 1087184
Below: Ben with his certificate and book 1087185

The Holland Moor team with their medals

Pupils showcase sporting skills

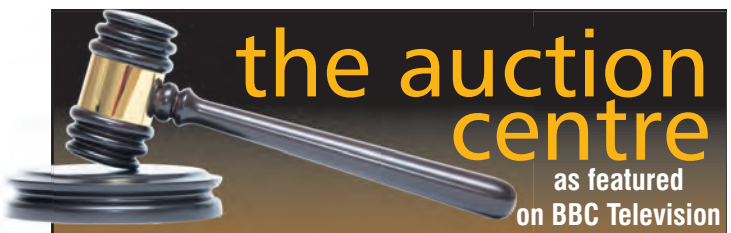
YOUNGSTERS from schools in Skelmersdale and Up Holland recently competed against each other at different sporting events.

SHARES PE, made up of local primary schools, held their last competition of the year at West Lancashire College.

The event was a Key Stage One multi–skills competition and 10 Skelmersdale and Up Holland schools took part with four children representing each school.

The competition consisted of a mixture of activities such as football, dribbling, tennis, balancing, throwing, challenges, speed bounce jumps and many more.

Holland Moor Primary School topped the points to take first place, followed by Bishop Martin C of E Primary School in second and Delphside Community Primary in third.



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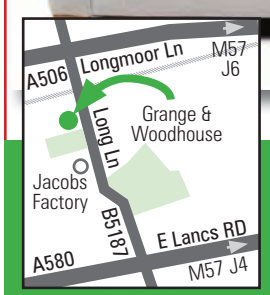

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Schools invited to join in Birdwatch survey

Report by **Danielle Thompson**

EAGLE–eyed youngsters from West Lancashire are once again being invited to take part in the world's biggest school wildlife survey.

Now in its 15th year, the RSPB's Big Schools' Birdwatch helps to track numbers of birds in school grounds, giving the charity an insight into which species are doing well or not , as well as providing pupils with a great learning experience.

The birdwatch takes one hour and teachers can pick any day during the first half of spring term to take part.

The survey works across a wide age and ability range and there is plenty of flexibility to run it as simply as teachers would like – either as the centrepiece of cross–curricular studies, project work, or a way to improve their school grounds.

Running from the start of the year until February 12, each school's findings help the RSPB's experts to build a picture of bird populations and monitor any changes, while carrying out the survey helps children to improve their observation skills.

The blackbird was the most commonly seen bird in last year's Big Schools' Birdwatch

Valuable

Last year, a record breaking 90,000 pupils and teachers across the UK took part in the Big Schools' Birdwatch, which revealed the blackbird as the most commonly seen bird in school grounds, with 85% of schools seeing an average of five, followed by the starling, house sparrow, black–headed gull, carrion crow and woodpigeon.

Now the RSPB is looking forward to receiving this year's school wildlife sightings, which also contribute to the results of the RSPB's annual Big Garden Birdwatch, the biggest wildlife survey in the world taking place on January 30 and 31.

Birdwatch co–ordinator, James Harding–Morris, said: "This fun and educational activity is suitable for all ages and abilities and, best of all, it takes just one lesson or lunchtime.

"Research has shown that children are increasingly disconnected from nature, which is linked to poorer physical and mental health, so this event is a great way to get young people excited about the world around them.

"It also provides us with valuable information on how some of our familiar birds are doing and encourages the children to help give nature a home."

For more information or to register to take part, visit rspb.org.uk/schoolswatch.

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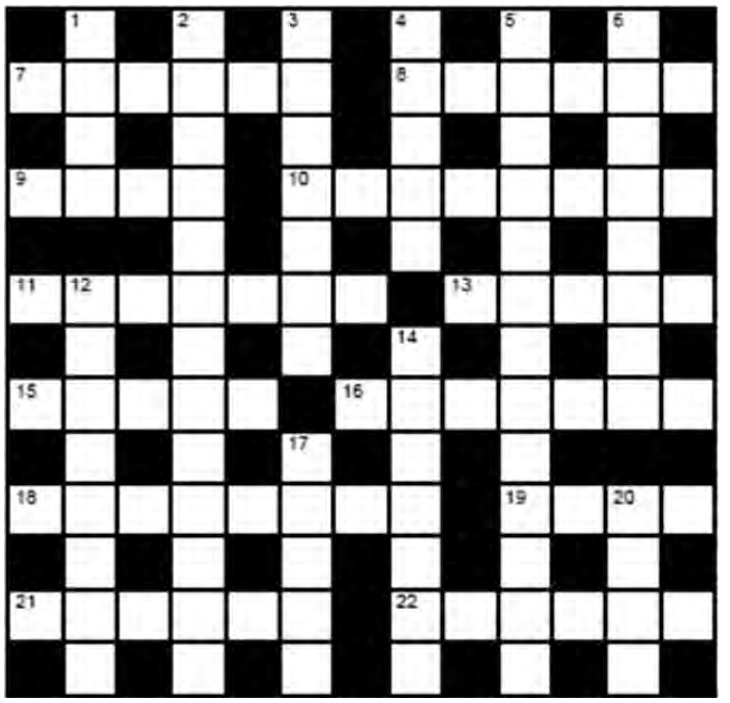

Last week's solutions:

Across: 7 Daughter-in-law. 8 Transmit. 9 Tuba. 10 Malaise. 12 Churl. 14 Hatch. 16 Midweek. 19 Hair. 20 Road sign. 22 Straw-coloured.

Down: 1 Lair. 2 Uganda. 3 Itemise. 4 Trite. 5 Snitch. 6 Jamboree. 11 Amaranth. 13 Disable. 15 Corral. 17 Wash up. 18 Trick. 21 Grew.

ACROSS

7 Reddish-brown colour (6)
8 Not level or smooth (6)
9 Payments or charges for professional services (4)
10 Free-swinging weighted rod that regulates the mechanism of a clock (8)
11 Cast a spell over, enchant (7)
13 Three score (5)
15 Pretend blow (5)
16 Convert into reusable material (7)
18 Gourd-bearing evergreen tropical American tree (8)
19 Unfasten (4)
21 Move hurriedly with short quick steps (6)
22 Small group of words, expression (6)

DOWN

1 Entice (4)
2 Survey (13)
3 Examine (7)
4 Comical (5)
5 Person employed to protect a building or property (8,5)
6 Denial, contradiction (8)
12 Grace, stylishness (8)
14 Give a different form to (7)
17 Woodland deity in classical mythology (5)
20 Item of office or classroom furniture (4)

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Action group to stage peaceful protest over plastic plant scheme

Report by **Danielle Thompson**

A PEACEFUL protest is scheduled to take place tomorrow (Thursday, January 14) at a site in West Lancs which could become the first plant in the UK to convert waste plastic into diesel fuel.

In September, the Champion revealed that P–Fuel Limited had submitted an application to Lancashire County Council to create a new facility to chemically convert non–recyclable plastics at the West Quarry site in Appley Bridge to the dismay of residents.

Now action group, Appley Bridge Community Against Greenbelt Erosion have planned a peaceful protest to coincide with a site visit by members of the county council's planning committee starting at 10am.

Members of the group will also travel to County Hall in Preston next Wednesday (January 20) when the committee members are scheduled to make a decision on the application.

The plant, which would have a 17.5 metre chimney stack, would operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and would process up to six tonnes of of plastics each year – the maximum amount allowed.

Residents in neighbouring Parbold and Dalton and environmentalists in Skelmersdale also raised concerns fearful that potentially harmful emissions could be blown in their direction by prevailing winds.

Objectors are also angry that an environment and health report into the plant and submitted to the council was commissioned by P–Fuel themselves.

Planning permission was previously granted two years ago to use the site to generate electricity using bio–liquids.

Bird charity seeks more volunteers to monitor country's species at risk

A NATIONAL wildlife charity is calling for more volunteers to help monitor bird numbers in the UK as a new report reveals that more than 25% of species across the country are in need of 'urgent' help.

The British Trust for Ornithology's Birds of Conservation Concern report, the latest assessment of the UK's 244 species of birds, found that 67 are now on the trusts's Red List of those of the 'highest conservation concern'.

And an appeal is being made for West Lancs residents to volunteer with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

The Red List now includes the curlew, puffin and nightingale, as well as more familiar species such as the starling, turtle dove and cuckoo.

The starling– one of the familiar species causing conservation concerns

And the list now accounts for more than a quarter (27%) of the UK species up from 21% at the last assessment in 2009 when 52 species were on the list.

The decline of widespread woodland birds has developed since the 2009 assesment, while three species of seabird have also joined the Red List for the first time.

However, the latest assessment does contain some good news as it demonstrates that targeted conservation action can make a real difference.

Three species – the bittern, dunlin and nightjar – have been moved from the Red List to the the Amber List, due to targeted actions which have triggered a boost in numbers.

• To volunteer, visit www.rspb.org.uk.

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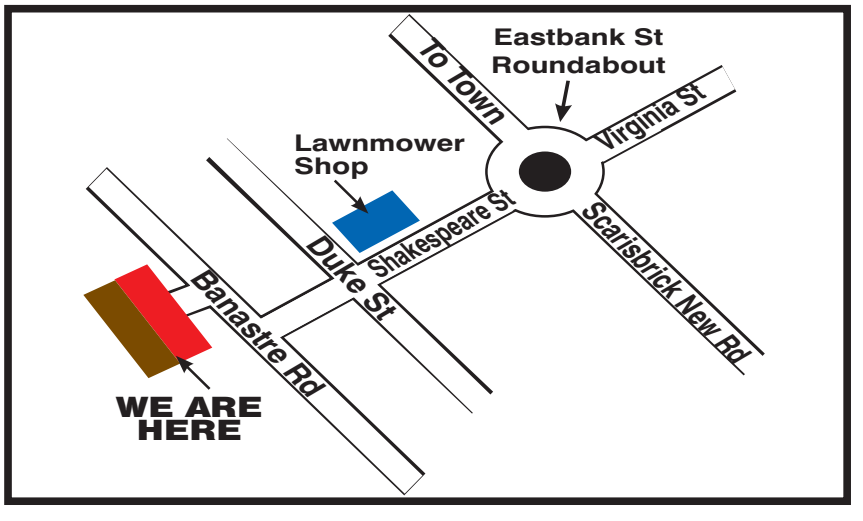

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This year's Hillsborough service to be last one held at Anfield

Report by **Tom Martin**

THIS year will be the final time the annual Hillsborough memorial service will take place at Anfield stadium in a move which has split opinion from those who have attended the event over the years.

Last week, the Hillsborough Family Support Group (HFSG) announced that Friday 15 April, 2016 will be the last service to be held at Liverpool FC's home ground, bringing an end to 27 years of tradition.

Every year on this date, family members of the victims, Liverpool players and staff, fans and residents gather to remember the 96 supporters who died in the 1989 disaster.

The families, which have come to the decision unanimously, believe the timing is right with the inquests into the deaths expected to conclude before the upcoming anniversary.

The HFSG has said this April's service will provide them with "final closure" and added that they hope those who want to continue remembering the 96 can do so in their private way.

Social media users were quick to back the families and wish them well, but others believe the annual service should carry on at Anfield as it "brings the fans together".

Chair of the HFSG, Margaret Aspinall, said: "The 96 will never be forgotten. It is likely that the inquests will be concluded before the anniversary so this final memorial service will provide the families with some closure.

"The HFSG would like to thank everyone for all the support the families have received over the past 27 years and all those people who have attended the service at Anfield each year.

"We would also like to extend our thanks to Liverpool Football Club for their continued support over the past 27 years and for hosting the service each year at Anfield.

"We hope that the public and fans respect the decision of the HFSG and will continue to remember the 96 in their own perhaps more private way."

The decision has divided opinion from some social media users, with one person on Facebook commenting: "This has shocked me. There's no reason to stop the annual service. It has always been moving to see everyone come together and it will be a shame for this to end."

Others claim that in the future, a service should be held at Anfield for special anniversaries, such as the 30th in three years time.

A lot of internet users have been keen to back the decision of HFSG.

David Ervin posted on Facebook: "This remains one of football's most heartbreaking tragedies. If HFSG says the annual service can be discontinued, then theirs is the only opinion that matters."

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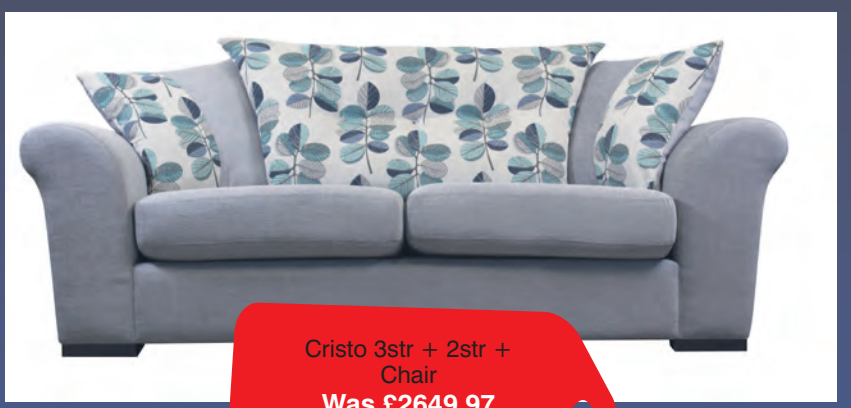

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ORMSKIRK UKULELE BAND TO STRIKE A CORD AT RETIREMENT DEVELOPMENT

A Retirement Living development in Ormskirk is holding an afternoon of all-singing, all-strumming entertainment with live performances from a local, Ormskirk-based ukulele band, as well as delicious cheese and wine tasting.

The free event will be staged at Coronation Court on County Road, on Friday 5 and Saturday 6 of February. Ormskirk retirees and their families are invited to pop along to the development between 12pm and 3pm to enjoy a foot-stomping obituary of rock-n-roll and popular classics, and the chance to try a variety of different cheeses and wines from around the world.

Fiona Brooks, Regional Sales and Marketing Director for McCarthy and Stone North West, comments: "We're really excited to welcome visitors to Coronation Court to enjoy some good music and take a tour around our beautiful development. It's such a fantastic opportunity for local retirees and their families to come and see first-hand what a happy and thriving community we have here at Coronation Court, and to have any questions answered that they might have by our experienced Sales Team."

Presenting an attractive contemporary design, inspired by the combination of history and character that Ormskirk is known for, Coronation Court also provides an extensive range of facilities to help homeowners enjoy every minute in their new property. These include a: stunning homeowners' lounge ideal for socialising with friends, beautifully landscaped gardens in which to relax and a convenient guest suite should homeowners have friends or relatives to stay. The development also benefits from its very own House Manager, who ensures the smooth running of the development, a security entrance system, plus 24-hour emergency call points for added peace of mind for both homeowners and their families.

Fiona continues, "A thriving community and companionship are just some of the many benefits of living in a McCarthy and Stone development, and events like these are such a brilliant example of that! All of our staff are working really hard to make the final preparations, and the homeowners have said how much they are looking forward to hearing the band, and to welcoming something a little bit different!"

McCarthy and Stone is committed to helping those over 60 stay independent for longer. The option of Retirement Living provides the independence of retaining home ownership, while living in a secure, low maintenance and energy efficient apartment with the opportunity to benefit from companionship when they want it and privacy when they need it.

The event is expected to be busy, so it is recommended that anyone wanting to come along reserve their place by contacting the sales team on: 0800 3100385 or via email at Coronation.Court @mccarthyandstone.co.uk.

For more information about Retirement Living at Coronation Court please visit: www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk

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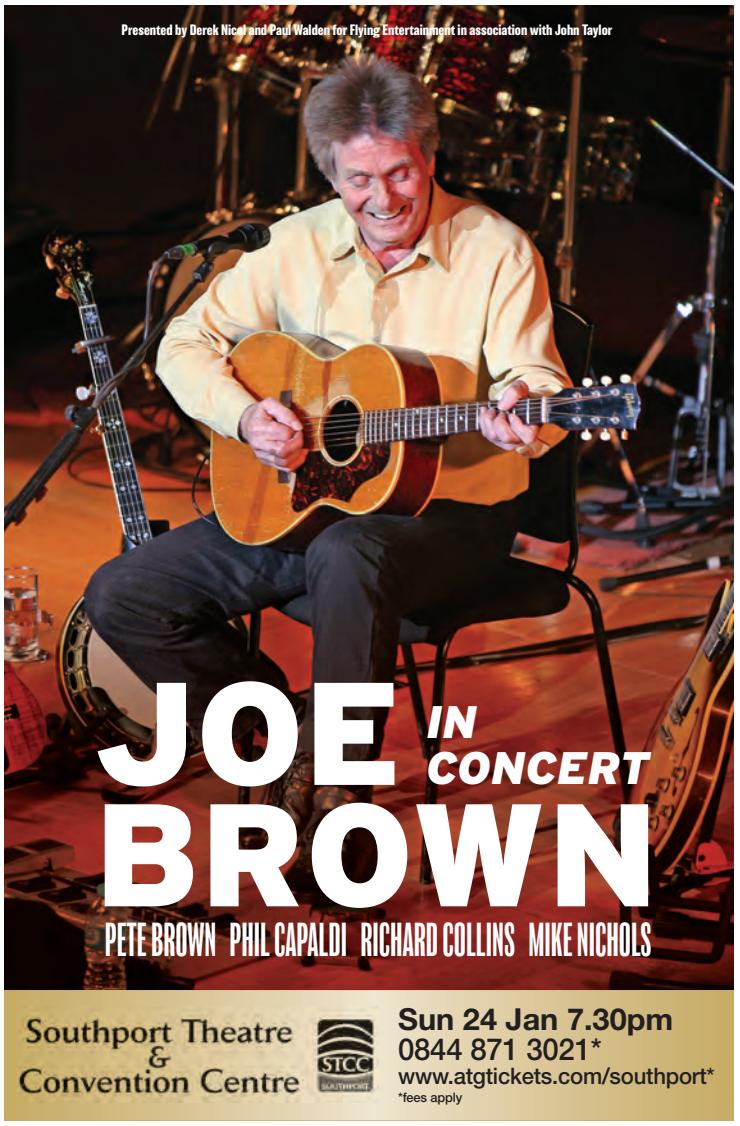
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Gripping murder mystery is SDC's first play of 2016

Preview by **Ron Ellis**

A scene from Death in High Heels. Picture by Fletcher Hill photography Code NA

THE Southport Dramatic Club open the second half of their season with a gripping murder mystery originally written by Christiana Brand, one of the last great mystery writers of the Golden Age of Crime, and adapted for the stage by popular playwright, Richard Harris, author of 'Stepping Out'.

Behind the gossip and glamour of a 1930's fashion house, secrets and lies are rife.

When 'Christophe et Cie' employee, Miss Doon, suddenly collapses and dies, poisoned by the oxalic crystals used in the workshop, suspicion falls on the various employees, each with a motive to murder the unsuspecting victim.

Enter Inspector Charlesworth and his assistant Sergeant Wyler to investigate. With many red herrings along the way it will take a second murder to lead them to the killer before the final curtain falls.

The play is directed by Robin Hirsch. Giles Davidson plays Inspector Charlesworth and Angela McIntyre is Sergeant Wyler. The rest of the cast includes Diane Mackley, Sarah Viali, Carole Quirk, Ann Richards, Keri Powell, Nikki Ritchie, Simon Hawkins and Howard Kernahan.

Death in High Heels opens on January 22 until January 30 at 7 45pm.

The box office opens on January 15 at 11am, telephone number 01704 530521/530460.

editorial@champnews.com

Moving stories feature in city play

BOSSES at Liverpool's St George's Hall are inviting people to a performance of two moving stories.

The first is based on the most famous chronicle of life under Nazi occupation, Anne Frank's Diary and the other on Eva Schloss' book, After Auschwitz.

They will be performed in the Concert Room on Tuesday 26 and Wednesday, January 27 (Holocaust Memorial Day).

The evening in is two halves: the first looking at Anne in her room in the Annexe in Amsterdam; the second telling Eva's story, from her childhood, when she played with Anne.

Otto Frank returned to Amsterdam to discover that he was the sole family survivor of the Holocaust. His two beloved daughters Margot and Anne, and his wife, had died in Auschwitz. The only memento of those two years, he and his family had endured, hiding in an Annexe, was Anne Frank's diary.

The diary reached into the hearts of everyone who read it, and became a world bestseller. An innocent 14–year–old girl, with her life beckoning, had harmed no one.

Her only 'crime' was to be Jewish and for that 'crime', young teenage Anne was deprived of her freedom and then her life.

Anne Frank is played by Justine Saville, an aspiring student at the acclaimed Liverpool Theatre School and is directed by Ellie Hurt, a post–graduate from the Liverpool John Moore's University.

Eva Schloss survived the horror of Auschwitz, where her family met Otto Frank. Eva's father and brother died in captivity. Eva's mother and Otto Frank consoled each other over the deaths of their family members, and they married.

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BROWN LEATHER 2 Seater Settee and Matching Recliner. Excellent Condition. Recliner Hardly Used. £300 o.n.o. 07802 154513

3 SEATER 3 piece suite, Green leather with oak base optional recliner £150 01695577450

WANTED Touring caravan. Can collect, decent condition, but no mad prices please . £0 01704 222939

2 PIECE SUITE 2 two–seater cream sofas. Very good condition with washable covers. £200 o.n.o. 01704224140/07856261561

3 PIECE SUITE Dark red with wooden bases, quite large and very comfy. Good condition, washable covers. £150 o.n.o. 01704224140/07856261561

3 ROLLS WALLPAPER Arthouse anaglypta, Pattern No 870101 Lily white. All rolls still in sealed wrapping. Surplus to requirements. Originally £8.99 a roll, will sell the 3 rolls for £10 07821417560

COFFEE TABLE Good condition, light wood. £100 o.n.o. 01704224140/07856261561

DROP LEAF TABLE Pine with 4 chairs, very good condition £30. Ottoman, very good condition £10 07849 180949

DUVET in pockets of white goose feather/down, anti–allergy – double size 13.5 tog. Good quality. £15 07821417560

DYSON Dyson DC19 T2 in good condition with all attachments & in original box £85 o.n.o. 01704 571776

DYSON DC04 Ex cond £20 01695 421558

ELECTRIC FIRE SUITE cream surround, black back and hearth, chrome coal effect, only 48'W x 43'H £100 01704 535652

FIRE SURROUND. Fibreglass construction, nice and light to carry. Height is 1 metre x 1.55 wide. Traditional detail fleur de lye style. Good clean condition. Buyer collects. Ainsdale area £10.00 01704560627

GARAGE DOOR 2270w 2120h electronic good £400. Patio UPVC Doors, A rated 2960w 2120h £750. Patio doors 88h 44w UPVC £150. Wall units 1000w good £10 EACH 01704 227597

HEADBOARD A Richard Henry double bed headboard, in very good condition, coral in colour, bargain. £49.00 07530562650

HEADBOARD FOR DOUBLE bed solid oak excellent quality and condition as new from John Lewis £80.00 o.n.o. 01515318055

HOUSE AND HOME

HI FI/STORAGE UNIT in reproduction polished mahogany (H28'/W21'/D18'. The lid lifts to reveal one moveable shelf and has brass handles on its shaped doors. £85 07821417560

HOOVER VACUUM BLAZE As new, boxed. Ainsdale. Cost £69.99 in Currys £35 01704 578552

HOTPOINT FRIDGE Ten years old. V. G. C. £15 Norwood Freezer, ten years old. V. G. C. £15 07544 036210

KIRKBY CLEANER with all the accessories, serviced regularly in good condition £180 0151 765760

LAMPS AND LIGHTS One table lamp, like new from Next and one a touch sensitive, good quality £18.00 07530562650

MIRROR oblong (52insx17ins) in mahogany with carved edging and gold gilt inset. Robust mirror. Superb condition. £40 o.n.o. 07821417560

NEST OF 3 TABLES in reproduction walnut, with mottled table tops, carved edges and carved upper shaped narrow legs. The biggest table is 22' from the floor. VGC. £85 o.n.o. 07821417560

OCCASIONAL TABLE/SEWING BOX polished dark brown wood standing on legs, reaching 19ins high. Table top has a diameter of 18' and has scalloped edging. Circa 1950s. Lift the table top to reveal sewing box/storage space. Aughton area. £35 o.n.o. 07821417560

OFFICE DESK & CHAIR Light Oak Finish 6 feet long x 2 feet eight inches wide with 3 No draws either side, including Black High Back Office Chair, Buyer to Collect £75.00 07795 332604

PYREX MICROWAVE BROWNING dish, 22cmx22cm, white ceramic/glass lid. Very little used – clean and in excellent condition. £8 o.n.o. 07821417560

RECLINER SWIVEL CHAIR with stool, green leather, excellent condition £80. St Pauls Church West Derby Frank Green Limited Print framed £65 0151 9312193

RISER RECLINER CHAIR Black, waterfall back, in good condition £250 o.n.o. 0795 251 1126

ROUND UNFRAMED WALL MIRROR diameter 18ins. If you are looking for a plain mirror this is for you. Will suit any room. £5 07821417560

STANDARD LAMP MAHOGANY With three claw feet, Large cream shade, Antique style good condition. £40.00 0151 924 6393

STORAGE TRUNK METAL Vintage painted steamer trunk with studded top ideal for bedding box, coffee table, storage. Light colour. Very good condition. 18H x27.5W x19inchesD. May deliver. £35 o.n.o. 01704 560150

TABLE PROTECTOR oblong 30insx66ins. One side wipeable, the other felt to protect the table. £5 07821417560

TEAK SIDEBOARD Circa 1970s, in polished wood and in excellent condition. Has 4 central drawers and a cupboard either side. It sits on 7' legs. Aughton area. £90 o.n.o. 07821417560

TWO BAR STOOLS New chrome cream leather £85. Double headboard, cream silk buttoned £50. Dressing table mirror triple, new. Cost £250. Acceot £125 01704 564375

VICTORIAN FIRE GATE £5. Electrolux Turbo Hoover £10 Leather work boots, steel toe cap £5 01704 876909

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VINYL LPS selection of 70s/80s music. All in VGC. £1 each 07821417560

TOYS AND GAMES

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DISNEY PRINCESS MOTORBIKE RIDE ON. VGC £14 o.n.o. 07932396501

DOLL SMOBY ROBY Giant dressed Roby Doll 2 ft high in good condition. £10 01704 560150

ELLA BALLERINA Soft toy x two. 25 Outfits, 16 magazines, all excellent condition £25 07590336533

FISHER PRICE Imaginext dinosaur mega t–rex. Motorised action sound effects, removable armour, neck swings, jaws open, roars like a real dinosaur £20 01704 879324

JOHN LEWIS PRE–SCHOOL/JUNIOR DESK Lovely desk with lift up lid in great condition. Includes chair. Suit from pre–school to junior.In Beech rubber wood. £20.00 01704832419

NEXT BOYS TOY STORAGE TROLLEY Comes in plastic and has 3 different boxes that slot if for storage. On wheels. Great Condition £18 01704832419

RAZOR E300S SCOOTER complete with charger and hardly used, very quick and ideal for ages 10–16. bargain and collection from southport £90 07482010176

TRIKE ELC Early Learning Centre police trike for toddler in good condition. Construction is mainly wooden. £5 01704 560150

TOYS AND GAMES

WADDINGTONS MONOPOLY GAME Circa 1960/65 version. In box with instructions. Has been played with – one dice missing. £3 07821417560

MISC

CHINA CUP SERVICE with pictures of Bickerstaffe village on. Never been used £100 o.n.o. John 07970 371307

WANTED Small upright piano with stool. £0 07532 373377

AUSTIN SEVEN RUBY 1935 Austin Seven Ruby front and rear stainless steel bumpers with bolts and end caps brand new never been fitted cost £180 Maghull area £80 07817280873

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MOBILITY

MOBILITY SCOOTER Freerider, electric, any condition £WANTED 01257 450046

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CLOSING DATE: Friday 22nd January 2016.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BALL
John
R.I.P

Pauline and family would like to say thank you to all relatives, friends, neighbours old and new for the thoughtful, kind and heartfelt expressions offered after the sad loss of John. Sincere thanks to staff on ward 14b Southport Hospital for their fantastic care of John. Also many thanks to both Dr.Sharma and all staff at Hillside Health Centre whose understanding was very welcome. Thank you also to the District nurses who saw to John, much appreciated. Finally a big thank you to Devonport Funeral Service who went out of their way to help ease our pain of losing a wonderful Husband, Dad, Grandad and Great Grandad.

GRIFFIN
John
RIP

John, Mo and family would like to say a big big thank you to relatives, friends and neighbours for their thoughtful expressions offered after the loss of John. Thank you all. Sincere gratitude to District Nurses, especially Gill, who helped me so much. Thanks to Tracy the curate at St Pauls for her beautiful sermon. Extra thank you to Queenscourt Hospice for their loving care and Devonports Funeral Directors. Thanks everyone.

DEATHS

CLANCY
Veronica
Passed away on 25th December 2015 Peacefully in hospital aged 93 years

Fortified by the rights of the Holy Mother Church

Dearly loved Auntie, to Tommy and Marie, Patricia and Tony. Great Auntie of Lynn, Deborah, Hayley and Hannah. Great great Auntie of Amy, Ben and Rikaya. Requiem Mass to be held at St Patrick's RC Church, Marshside Rd, Southport on Wednesday 20th January at 2pm prior to committal at Southport Crematorium. Family flowers only please. If preferred, donations to Marion Care. All enquiries to Broadbent and Seddon, Liverpool Road, Southport. Tel: 01704 550055.

BELL
Brian
2nd January 2016

Aged 65 years.

Formerly of Burscough, Rufford and Southport

Service at Southport Crematorium on Tuesday 19th January at 2pm then on to The Stanley Club, Burscough.

Enquires to Northern Cremations on 01772 876878 or 01253 420450

BRADY
Joseph
Passed away 6th January 2016

Aged 82

Parting comes and hearts are broken.
Loved ones go with words unspoken.
Deep in our hearts there's a memory kept.
For a husband and father we'll never forget.
Loving wife Irene, children Anna, Peter, Paul and Cathy. Partners Peter, Marie, Sammy. Grandchildren Kirsty, Erin, John, Shauna, Lewis, James, Stacey, Declan, Paul, Bethany, Robbie, Shaun, Alex and Ellie. Great grandchildren Libby, Jolie and Nancy. Funeral service at St. Helens Crematorium on Friday 4th January at 12.30pm. Enquiries to Devonport Funeral Services. 01695 731199.

DONNELLY
Brian
6th January 2016

After a long illness courageously borne, aged 78 years, the dearly beloved husband of Adele, loving father of Gill and Brian, much loved grandad to Conor and Laura. You fought right to the end, you always looked after your family all your life. We had 57 years together, I will miss you forever, your broken hearted wife, Adele
R.I.P
Funeral service at St Helens Crematorium on Monday 18th January 2016 at 10.30am. All enquiries to H Hardman & Co, Independent Family Funeral Directors of Skelmersdale. Tel: 01695 722122/7200012

DONNELLY
Brian
6th January 2016

Dad, You never complained, you never gave in, you fought a fight you could not win.
I will forget everything you did for Me,
Conor and Laura.
You were the best, love you dad.
R.I.P.
Your broken hearted daughter Gill
XXX

DONNELLY
Brian
6th January 2016

To grandad.
Thanks for always being there for me and supporting me until the end. You were a great man who always showed me great encouragement. Thanks very much for the support and love you gave me for all those years.
R.I.P.
Love you,
your grandson
Conor
XX

WRIGHT
John Edward
1st January 2016

Passed away peacefully at home. Aged 81 years.

Beloved husband of Irene. Devoted dad to Graham and Ian. Cherished grandad to all of his grandchildren and loving father-in-law to Christine and Suzanne. Funeral service to take place at Southport Crematorium on Monday 18th January 2016 at 11.20am. Family flowers please but donations if so desired are being received for Parkinson's UK. For further enquiries, please contact Hunters Funeral Directors, 128b Burscough Street, Ormskirk L39 2EY Tel: 01695 572997

MORAN
Carl
1st January 2016

Aged 44 years

Dearly loved son of Jennifer and Donovan, brother of Paula. He will be greatly missed by all his family and friends. Service at St. Teresa's R.C. Church on Thursday 14th January at 11:30am followed by interment at Duke Street Cemetery. Family flowers only please but if desired donations are being gratefully received for Macmillan Cancer Support. Donations and enquiries to Howard's Funeral Directors, 19a Banastre Road, Southport, PR8 5AW. Telephone: 01704 500086.

BROWN
RONA
1st January 2016

I thought of you with love today, but that is nothing new, I thought about you yesterday, and days before that too. I think of you in silence, I often speak your name, all I have is memories and your picture in a frame. Your memory is my keepsake with which I'll never part God has you in his keeping I have you in my Heart. Love you lots and forever your Granddaughter Tanhya and Jay Great granddaughter Lucia.

XXX

TINKER
Matthew
25th December 2015

Aged 49 years, sadly passed away

Much loved son of Babs and Phil, brother of Howard, uncle of Daisy, and highly respected local librarian, he will be greatly missed by his family, friends and colleagues. Funeral service is to be held at Southport Crematorium on Friday 15th January at 12:40pm. Donations are being gratefully received in lieu of flowers for Macmillan Cancer Support. All enquiries and donations to Howard's Funeral Directors, 19a Banastre Road, Southport, PR8 5AW. Tel 01704 500086.

DONNELLY
Brian
6th January 2016

Dad, you worked hard all your life to look after your family, you could not have done more. You fought a long battle with illness and faced up to it with unbelievable courage and died like a man.
God bless you dad.
Brian

DONNELLY
Brian
6th January 2016

The special moments that we shared, will never go away. You gave me all you had to give, however great or small, but most of all you gave your love, the greatest gift of all.

Never forgotten.

R.I.P Grandad, your grandaughter Laura

BROWN
Rona
On 1st January 2016

Peacefully in hospital. Aged 71 years.

Loving wife of the late John, devoted mum of Dave, Paula and Andy. Dear mother in law of John, cherished nan and great nan of all her grandchildren. Will be sadly missed by all her family and friends. Funeral service will take place at St Helens Crematorium on Wednesday 13th January at 10.30am. Family flowers only please by request. Donations if desired for MacMillan Cancer Support. All enquiries Margaret Whitelam Skelmersdale Funeral Service 29/31 Sandy Lane. Tel: 01695 559868.

BROWN
Rona
1st January 2016

Mum.
In our hearts always, your broken hearted daughter Paula, son in law John, Tanhya, Jay and Lucia
XXXXX

BRADY
Joseph
24/08/1933 - 06/01/2016

Loving Father and Grandfather

His nature was loving and giving, his heart was made of pure gold, and to us who truly love him, his memory will never grow old.

Love Peter, Marie, Declan, Bethany & Shaun

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Announcements

COMING OF AGE

STEPHEN JAMES HALSALL

Happy 18th Birthday Stephen

With lots of love and best wishes from Mum, Dad, David Carly

XXXXX

To place a family announcement please call 01704 392392

PRAYER

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Never known to fail.

O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, faithful Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this necessity, O Star of the Sea, help me and show me herein you are my Mother, O Holy Mary Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succour me in my necessity.

(Make Request).

There are none that can withstand your powers. Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3 Times).

Sweet Mother, I place this cause in your hands (3 times).

Thank you for your mercy towards me and mine.

This prayer must be said for three days and after that the request will be granted and the prayer must be published. **M.C**

To the sacred heart and Saint Martha Thank you for prayers answered

M.D.

IN MEMORIAM

BIRCH Barry (BAZ)

Died 18th January 2007

This day comes with sad regrets, of one we lost and can't forget. Deep in our thoughts you'll always stay, loved and remembered every day.

Love Mum and Dad.

XX

IN MEMORIAM

COOPER Sheila Megginson

11th January 2009

My dear wife Sheila, missed so much.
Barry.

XX

HERBERT Cliff

11th January 1953

We never need a special day, to bring you to our minds. For days without the thought of you, are very hard to find.
Birthday wishes to a beloved Son, Brother & Uncle.

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Never known to fail.

O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, faithful Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this necessity, O Star of the Sea, help me and show me herein you are my Mother, O Holy Mary Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succour me in my necessity.

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Sweet Mother, I place this cause in your hands (3 times).

Thank you for your mercy towards me and mine.

This prayer must be said for three days and after that the request will be granted and the prayer must be published. **MAS**

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PUBLIC NOTICES

THE LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (PICKLES DRIVE, HESKETH ROAD, BURSCOUGH, WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC) ORDER 2016

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Lancashire County Council intend to make an Order under **Section 14(1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984**, as amended, the effect of which will be to temporarily prohibit any motor vehicle from proceeding over that length of Pickles Drive, Burscough from its junction with Hesketh Road to a point outside property number 18 Pickles Drive, in the Borough of West Lancashire.

An alternative route for vehicular traffic affected by the closure is via:-

i. Furnival Drive – Higgins Lane – Hesketh Road and vice versa.
ii. Furnival Drive – Truscott Road – Hesketh Road and vice versa

The temporary prohibition is necessary to enable new sewer connection works to be carried out

And Further, during the period of the said closures, motor vehicles will be temporarily prohibited from proceeding over that length of Hesketh Road at its junction with Pickles Drive.

The prohibition will be operative from 0800 hours on Monday 18th January 2016 until 1600 hours on Friday 5th February 2016, or until completion of the works within this period.

Laura Padden, Highway Regulation and Inspection Manager
Lancashire Highway Services, 0300 123 6701

[Ref: 15/1444/ARH]

Lancashire County Council

www.lancashire.gov.uk

PUBLIC NOTICES

West Lancashire Borough Council Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Article 15

APPLICATION(S) AFFECTING A CONSERVATION AREA / LISTED BUILDING

Application No: 2015/1244/FUL Proposed two storey and single storey extension to property with new porch entrance, boundary wall treatment and vehicular entrance. Removal and replacement of rough cast render together with removal of new chimney stack and replacement roof covering at 9 Granville Park, Aughton.

Application No: 2015/1306/FUL Variation of Condition No. 7 imposed on planning permission 2015/0812/FUL relating to the visibility splays at Land To The South East Of 20, Delphside Close, Orrell.

The applications are available for viewing on the Council's web site www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning. Alternatively, the application can be viewed during normal office hours at 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk and at 1st Floor, The Concourse, Skelmersdale. If you wish to comment on the proposal you can do so via the Council's web site, by e.mail to plan.apps@westlancs.gov.uk or in writing to the Planning Division, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, but these must be received within 21 days of the date of this notice quoting the application no. Any comments made will be available for public inspection.

Applications for Minor Commercial and Householder Development

In the event that an appeal is made against a decision of the Council to refuse to grant planning permission for the proposed development, and that appeal then proceeds by way of the expedited procedure under the written representations procedure, any representations made to the Council about an application will be passed to the Secretary of State and there will be no opportunity to make further representations.

John R Harrison DipEnvP., MRTPI Assistant Director Planning

Dated: 13th January 2016 PDNOT880

PUBLIC NOTICES

West Lancashire Borough Council Village Shop Rate Relief Scheme [Local Government and Rating Act 1997]

Under the provisions of the above Act the Council has produced an updated draft Rural Settlement List (the List) which identifies any rural settlement which is wholly or partly within the designated rural area (as specified by the Secretary of State).

The List is available for public inspection, free of charge at the Offices of West Lancashire Borough Council, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk until, **31/03/2017 on Mondays to Thursdays from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Fridays from 9.00am to 4.45pm**

The List will take effect from 1/4/2016

Any qualifying Post Office, General Store, Food Store, Public House or Petrol Filling Station situated within a rural settlement as identified on the List, may be entitled to either Mandatory or Discretionary rate relief under this scheme. For application forms for rate relief, general information and advice please contact the Business Rates Team at the offices of West Lancashire Borough Council.

Dated: 13 January 2016

Kim Webber B.Sc., M.Sc., Managing Director (Transformation)
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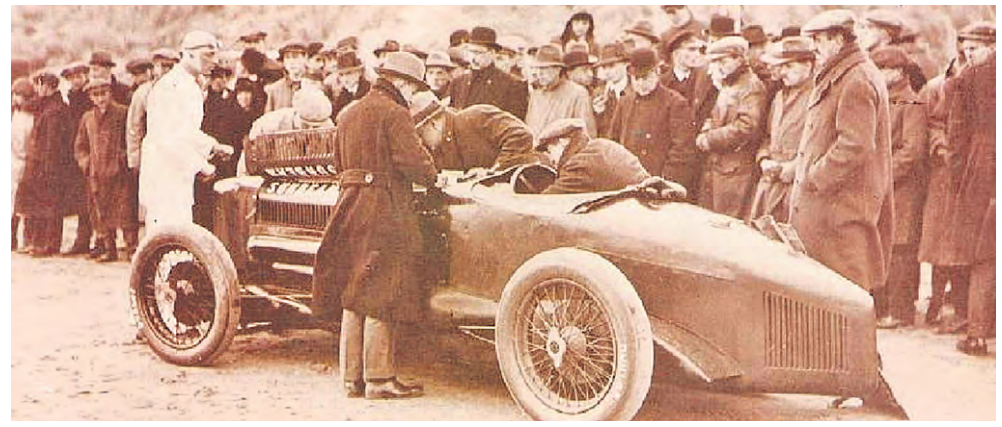

Sir Henry Segrave made motoring history in Southport nine decades ago Code NA

SOUTHPORT is finally getting its moment in the motoring spotlight.

Anyone up on their local history will know the town actually does pretty well on automotive heritage – and that Red Rum isn't the only sort of horsepower our part of the world can be proud of. A century ago we were building Vulcan cars here, followed by Corgi scooters well into the 1950s, and when the beach wasn't being used to hone future Grand National winners it was being used as a race circuit for blokes in Minis and Hillman Imps. We're also home to the oldest Morgan dealership in the world (which has been selling Malvern's finest since 1926) and just up the road in Banks there's a chap who's made more than 400 re–creations of the Lotus Europa.

Yet our finest automotive hour has been all but forgotten. Five years ago I remember writing for The Champion that the day Sir Henry Segrave set the world land speed record right here in the North West – March 16, 1926 – was marked only by the name of the town's branch of JD Wetherspoon. The resort's stint as the fastest place on earth had been all but forgotten – until now.

Aintree Circuit Club – the people behind the Ormskirk MotorFest – have vowed to mark the 90th anniversary in style. I've seen the plans for the event and it's exciting stuff; they could have parked some classic cars outside The Atkinson and left it at that, but they haven't. They're planning an entire week of events, topped off by a re–creation of the actual run using a Sunbeam Tiger (V12–engined vintage monster, not the 1960s roadster) just like Sir Henry did.

That means it'll be the second land speed record re–enactment in a year, following the return of Sir Malcolm Campbell's Bluebird to Pendine Sands in Wales. To have something like that happen right on my doorstep is hugely exciting, which is why I can't wait to see this event getting off the ground and witnessing a 1920s racer capable of more than 150mph fire into action on the very beach it wowed the world.

The event's called The Southport Festival of Speed and I'm sure there'll be plenty more on it in The Champion in the coming weeks. See you there!

David Simister is features editors of Classic Car Weekly.

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57 FORD FOCUS TITANIUM, 1600CC 5DR HATCHBACK, in nimbus grey metallic, only 1 owner from new, full service history, full 12 months Mot, alloy wheels, air con, remote locking **£3695**

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08 CHRYSLER SEBRING SE CRB LIMITED 2.0 DIESEL, service history 4 door saloon, grey leather trim, alloys, top of range, finished in black **£2395**

62 PEUGEOT 107 ALLURE, finished in Arctic white, only 1 owner from new and travelled only 19,000 miles. Excellent condition, VERY low emissions, FREE road tax. Service history, only group 1 very low insurance **£4595**

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52 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 COMFORT 5DR HATCHBACK, finished in star silver metallic, service history, only 47,000 from new, full 12 months MoT **£1095**

07 RENAULT CLIO, finished in graphite grey metallic, 1400cc, special edition Dynamique model. Only 2 owners, full MoT, remote locking, 2 keys, Renault alloys, service history, 69,000 miles only **£2595**

60 FIAT PANDA 5DR HATCHBACK, finished in diamond white, 1100cc, only 1 owner from new, full Fiat service history, remote locking, 12 months MoT, 3 months Parbold parts & labour warranty..... **£2995**

60 CHEVROLET SPARK 5DR HATCH SPECIAL EDITION LS MODEL, in red, service history, only 36,000 miles from brand new. 1200cc, very low insurance, full MoT, only £30 per annum road tax. Grey cloth upholstery, remote locking, 2 keys **£3795**

08 NISSAN NOTE, finished in cayman blue metallic, 1400cc with full Nissan service history. Special edition Acenta model, 2 keys, remote locking, electric windows, alloys, low insurance **£3495**

05 NISSAN ALMERA TINO FLAIR 5DR HATCHBACK MPV, finished in silver, previously supplied by ourselves, fully serviced, just been MoT'd, 70,000 miles, low insurance only group 5, superb condition..... **£1595**

10 BMW 320 4DR SALOON, in silver blue metallic, 2000cc petrol engine, AUTOMATIC, service history, 50,000 miles, Bluetooth sat nav, FSH alloy wheels **£11,995**

05 NISSAN MICRA 5DR, finished in techno grey, 2 owners, service history, only group2 insurance, 1200cc, full MoT **£1595**

07 NISSAN MICRA INITIA 5DR HATCHBACK, finished in blade silver, service history, previously supplied by ourselves, low tax and insurance, CD player, air con **£2395**

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07 MINI COOPER, finished in duck egg blue, and fitted with Mini alloy wheels. Only 1 owner from new and full service history, 12 months MoT, electric windows & mirrors, air conditioning **£4995**

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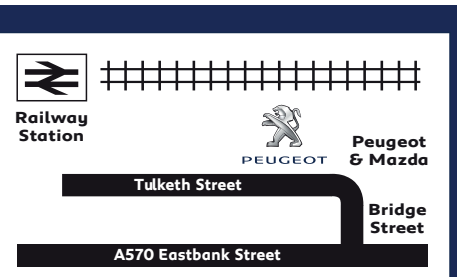

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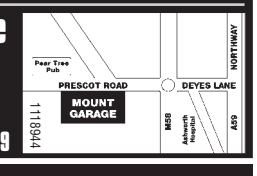

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Linnets lose out to Witton in thriller

Burscough 2
Witton Albion 3

BURSCOUGH slipped to their second league defeat in a row after losing out in a thrilling encounter against Witton Albion.

The Linnets failed to make the home advantage count as they narrowly lost out 3–2.

The scoring was opened by home striker Will Jones, who struck in the 28th minute.

However, Burscough failed to hold on to the lead for very long and Witton equalised just three minutes later through Callum Hassan. After the half time break, Jay Matthews gave the visitors the lead in the 62 minute.

Witton then looked to have wrapped up all three points when Rob Hopley scored in the 86th minute.

Burscough were not ready to give up just yet and pulled a goal back a minute later to make it 3–2.

Despite the home side throwing men forward in the closing stages, Witton held on.

Burscough's next game is away at New Mills on Saturday, January 16, kick–off 3pm.

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Lawson takes positives from defeat at high–flyers

Report by **Neil Leatherbarrow**

Salford City 4
Skelmersdale United 0

UNITED emerged from what was a difficult day at Salford's muddy Moor Lane ground on Saturday as wiser men.

Manager Tommy Lawson said he learned plenty about his players, especially as they showed the pride in themselves to keep battling on against, what at times, was an impossible task.

If you are playing away against one of the two teams that are favourites to win the league, the last thing you want to do is concede an early goal, so when Salford scored in the fourth minute it didn't bode well for Skelmersdale.

And when it was 4–0 by the 46th minute it threatened to be a complete nightmare day for the visitors.

The fact that it wasn't a more damaging defeat was down to the tenacity of the Skelmersdale players and augers well for the future.

The first Salford goal came via a touch of individual magic from winger John Johnston. The number seven, who is on loan from Alfreton, gathered the ball on the right and cut inside, continuing his run before rifling a thunderous shot across goalkeeper Martin Fearon into the far corner.

The second on the quarter–hour had a bit of quality and bit of luck about it. Midfielder Scott Burton lifted a wonderfully–weighted ball into the space between goalkeeper and defender and James Poole set off after it, as did keeper Fearon. The latter looked a marginal winner until the ball appeared to hold slightly on the soft surface and give Poole the opportunity to dink the ball past Fearon and finish well.

It was a nice piece of skill from both Burton and Poole, but luck certainly didn't smile on Fearon.

As the half progressed Skelmersdale came more into the game and it became obvious that new forward Max Hazeldine had the legs on the Salford backline.

In the 16th minute the youngster, who is on loan from Accrington, saw his shot go wide and then on 19 minutes he made no such mistake but was frustrated to see Chris Lynch get back to clear his goalbound effort off the line.

Salford effectively secured the points in the 35th minute when Johnston went on a mazy run down the right culminating in him wriggling past two defenders before firing into the roof of the net.

When, within seconds of the re–start, a long ball was converted by Jordan Hulme to make it 4–0, Skelmersdale had to fear the worst, especially as Salford had won 7–1 the previous Saturday.

The rain poured and the pitch was arguably by the end unplayable, but referee Helen Byrne had to finish the game off after she had started it.

For Skelmersdale the introduction of Isaac Kusaloka up front made a difference and Hazeldine continued to cause problems for the hosts. Salford hit the post via Richie Allen, but to even that up home keeper Jay Lynch made one magnificent diving save from Kusaloka in the latter stages.

By the end though, it seemed everyone was just satisfied that the whistle had gone so that they could dry off after the second–half monsoon.

Tommy Lawson was full of praise for Salford after the match saying: "Sometimes you have to say you were beaten by a good team. They are a good team. Yes, they have resources that we at Skem can only envy, but they have used those resources well and look well set for a proper promotion push.

"We have learned a fair bit about ourselves this afternoon and quite a lot of it is positive, despite the score."

Two join on loan as Skem face fixture uncertainty

Report by **Neil Leatherbarrow**

REGULAR followers of Skelmersdale United's fixtures who pick up The Champion to find out where they are playing next will be left thoroughly confused by the situation they are in at the moment.

The situation has been caused by the rain that has fallen on West Lancashire over the last few weeks and the necessity to play the FA Trophy replay against AFC Fylde as soon as possible, plus the need for the winner to make the long journey to Eastbourne Borough in the next round, a tie that was originally scheduled for Saturday, January 16 and one that might still take place then.

As things stand, if the weather doesn't intervene and the Stormy Corner pitch is fit to play on, Skelmersdale will play AFC Fylde at home in the FA Trophy tonight (Wednesday, January 13).

If they win that game they will play Eastbourne Borough away in the next round on Saturday, January 16. If Skelmersdale lose against AFC Fylde on Wednesday, they will play Stamford at home in a league game on Saturday, January 16 then travel to Colwyn Bay for a league game on Tuesday, January 19 and on to Stourbridge on Saturday, January 23.

If the match tonight at Skelmersdale is postponed – as it already has been on three occasions and the weather forecast is poor – then the game will be played on Saturday, January 16 and the confusion really does kick in!

Max Hazeldine

Firstly, Saturday's game against Fylde would be scheduled for Stormy Corner but there is pressure to play the game elsewhere because it is holding up the fixtures of both clubs involved and the competition in general.

It is understood that efforts have been made to play on another ground but at the time of going to print there is nothing resolved.

This would mean the game at Eastbourne could finish up as a midweek game and create a big problem for the part–time players of Skelmersdale and AFC Fylde, due to the distances involved.

There is also talk that the game at Eastbourne might be on Saturday, January 23.

The situation is raising a lot of rumour and counter–rumour adding to the confusion.

Supporters are advised to check fixtures for the next week on the club website.

Skelmersdale manager Tommy Lawson has been busy himself over the last week or so, bringing in two additional players on loan, one from Everton and another from Accrington Stanley.

Eighteen–year–old midfielder Tyrone Duffus is the player from Everton's Academy and according to Tommy Lawson he arrives "highly recommended by the Everton coaching staff."

The other is Max Hazeldine, another 18–year–old and a forward who has already had experience at Stockport County where he made three first team appearances whilst on loan with the Hatters.

Both promise to enhance the Skelmersdale squad and give Lawson more options with a month of fixtures on Saturdays and midweek to come.

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SKELMERSDALE
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